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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to improve development of individualized education plans (IEPs) of mainstreamed students with disabilities in one junior high school, through applied strategies to increase the active involvement of regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development. Interventions with classroom teachers included encouraging their initiation of IEP goals and design of instructional modifications. Interventions with parents included more school/parent communication and involvement of parents in specific intervention strategies such as sending the parents achievement memos, copies of important special education news, and monthly communication regarding their child's academics and behavior. Interventions with students included multidisciplinary team screening and involvement of the student on the multidisciplinary team and in initiating goals and objectives. Data analysis indicated that the practicum resulted in greater participation of regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in decision-making and the IEP process. Recommendations resulting from the practicum include continuing having regular classroom teachers initiate goals, objectives and classroom modifications; continue with annual training for parents on parents' rights and responsibilities regarding the IEP; and provide all special education students with training to allow them to become more active participants in IEP development. Fourteen appendices present the forms, letters, questionnaires, and screening instruments used in the practicum. (Contains 41 references.) (DB)

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ED 385 986

Improving the IEP Process: Strategies for Increasing the Active Involvement of Junior High Regular Classroom Teachers, Parents, and Students in the Decision-Making Process and IEP Development

by

Dennis A. deNomme

Cluster 52a

A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Dennis A. deNomme under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University

Approval

June 5 1995
Date of Final Approval of Report

Dr. Mary W. Staggs
Dr. Mary Staggs, Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Improving the IEP: Strategies for Increasing the Active Involvement by Junior High Regular Classroom Teachers, Parents, and Students in the Decision-Making Process and IEP Development. deNomme, Dennis A., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Individualized Education Programs/Learning Disabled/Participative Decision Making/Teacher Responsibility/Teacher Involvement/Teacher Participation/Parent Teacher Conferences/Parent Participation/Parent Responsibilities/Parent Influence/Parent School Relationship/Parent Student Relationship/Student Responsibilities/Student Participation/Student Rights/Student Role/Child Responsibility/Student School Relationship.

This practicum was designed to improve the individualized education plan (IEP) through applied strategies to increase the active involvement by junior high regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development. The writer implemented 25 intervention strategies to accomplish this goal. The regular classroom teachers' interventions focused on the following areas: (1) scheduling to accommodate the teachers; (2) having the regular classroom teachers initiate goals and objectives for their mainstreamed students and listing them on the student's IEP; (3) having the regular classroom teachers fill out a semester progress report that reflects student progress with regards to their regular classroom goals and objectives; (4) having the regular classroom teachers taking a more active role in IEP conferences; and (6) having the regular classroom teachers design modifications within the regular classroom and listing them on the student' IEP. The parent's interventions focused on the following areas: (1) sending the parents a welcome back to school letter, (2) sending the parents achievement memos, (3) sending the parents social-grams, (4) sending the parents copies of important special education news, (5) sending the parents monthly communication regarding their child's academics and behavior, (6) providing the parents with intervention strategies for the child's poor academics and behavior, (7) providing the parents with inservice training, (8) providing parents with a special education advocacy manual, (9) providing parents with special education terminology and support organizations, (10) scheduling IEP conferences, (11) inviting parents to attend the IEP conference, (12) sending parents a "rough draft" of the IEP before the conference, (13) having parents initiate goals and home interventions, (14) having the parents fill out an input and concerns worksheet, and (15) having the parents fill out a student screening instrument. The final four intervention focused on the student and they included: (1) screening the student using a multidisciplinary Team (MDT) participation screening instrument to ensure that no harmful effects will result from the student's participation; (2) inviting the students to become an active member of their MDT; (3) providing the student with preconference training, and (4) providing the student with the opportunity to initiate some personal goals and objectives for the school year.

Analysis of the data demonstrates this practicum was a success. In the writer's school district, the regular classroom teachers, parents, and students now participate more actively in the decision-making and IEP development for junior high special education students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community and school where this practicum was implemented are located in the southwestern United States. This small rural community sits just north of a large mountain range at an altitude of 4500 feet. The community is not supported by local manufacturing or farming therefore residents rely on a larger nearby metropolitan area for employment. The community itself is not experiencing rapid growth but recent development in the area poses a good chance of increased population and expanding industry. The socioeconomic composition of the community is typical of many other small rural communities in the region. The community's population consists of 4,700 residents with an ethnic breakdown of 60% Anglo-American and 40% Hispanic.

The writer's school district is certified as an elementary district and operates on two campuses. The preschool and kindergarten grades are on the primary campus and the first through eighth grade is on the junior high campus. The current enrollment for both campuses is just over 400 students. The school district pays tuition to two nearby high schools for 256 students in grades 9 through 12. The nearby rural high school serves 148 of the high school students while 108 attend a metropolitan high school. The district's enrollment has a very slight fluctuation year-to-year. Approximately 30 students enroll and exit the district each year keeping the overall enrollment consistent from year-to-year. In fact, many tenured teachers have taught second and third generation students.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer's work setting is located on the junior high campus. The administrative structure of the campus is comparable to other small rural school districts in that it consists of one principal for all campus administration. A fulltime psychologist/Special Education Director handles all student supportive services that include; coordinating testing, administering psychoeducational evaluations, and also shares administrative duties with the writer and Title I teacher in the absence of the campus principal. Between the two campuses there are thirty-five certified teachers for regular classroom instruction and seven teachers for the special student population. Nine fulltime aides assist the special student population teachers to meet the needs of the special education students.

The school district's mission statement outlines the district's philosophy and its encouragement for parental involvement in the school's day-to-day activities. The mission statement also places an emphasis on every child's inherent right to learn. This commitment to learning is evident in the teacher/student ratio. The average class size is one teacher to twenty-four students. Another reflection of the district's commitment to learning is witnessed by the number of active parent volunteers in the district. Today, 75 participants volunteer their time.

At the junior high level, special education functions on a resource room concept. The resource room currently has one fulltime special education teacher certified in emotionally handicapped and learning disabled. The resource room teacher has one full-time instructional aide and a half-time instructional aide to assist the teacher and students with day-to-day instructional activities. The current daily enrollment in the junior high resource room is 25 students from grades 6 through 8 that includes three extended resource students; students who have all their core academics in the resource room. Each resource student attends the resource room daily for either math, reading or language or any combination of the three areas depending on his or her deficiency. For the fifth grade and half of the sixth grade resource students, there is one fulltime special education teacher who also teaches the gifted students. Grades first through third also has one fulltime special education teacher and three fulltime teacher's aide. The special education program for the first through third grades services resource students as well as a few self-contained students. Instruction for students in the preschool, preschool handicapped program, and kindergarten is provided on the primary campus located across town. Other special areas provided for by the district includes a Chapter I reading specialist, English as a second language (ESL) specialist, and a speech and language specialist. All the special programs are supported fully and with enthusiasm from the district level administration to the students.

The writer has an extensive background in education that includes classroom experience and specialized certification. The writer currently holds a Bachelor of Science in Education Degree and a Master of Science in Education Degree. Each degree is in the area of special education and industrial arts education. The writer has used the combination of the two degreed areas extensively over a 24 year career-span. Each degreed area was chosen particularly to support the field of working with handicapped children and young adults from education through vocational training and work placement. During the first five years of postcollege employment the writer worked as the director of a rehabilitation facility and a private school. Following the directorship, the writer relocated to the sunbelt region of southwestern United States. Following relocation, the writer returned to school and accumulated sixty hours of continuing education beyond the Master's degree. The continuing education was directed towards obtaining certification in learning disabilities and school administration. The writer is currently in the third year of a doctoral program and anticipates graduating in June, 1995. The writer is in the Child and Youth Studies doctoral program specializing in special services and exceptional children.

The writer has been in the field of special education for the past 24 years. The first five year's experience was with private and state-sponsored special education programs for high school age students and adult vocational educational training. The majority of the student population during those years was classified as either moderate mental retardation (MOMR), mild mental retardation (MIMR), or with multiple disabilities (MD). The remaining 19 year's experience has been with public school programs for special education students ranging from kindergarten to the 12th-grade.

The writer is certified in three educational areas: (1) administration (principal for kindergarten through twelfth grade), (2) special education (learning disabled and emotionally disabled), and (3) regular education (industrial arts education for kindergarten through twelfth grade).

The writer's primary professional responsibilities deal directly with teaching junior high special education students in a resource setting. The students attend the resource room for a 47 minute instructional period for each academic area in which they are identified as specific learning disabled (SLD). One student is identified as emotionally disabled (ED) and three sixth grade students are assigned to the resource room for all their core academic subjects. The ED student and the SLD students are mainstreamed into the regular classroom for the majority of the school day. The mainstream environment and exposure to other regular classroom students and activities provide each student with his/her least restrictive environment (LRE).

The writer's current professional responsibilities within the work setting encompass more than just teaching junior high special education. Like many other school districts, the writer's setting requires teachers to wear many professional hats. The writer's current nonteaching responsibilities are: (a) to cochair all junior high Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings, (b) to provide regular classroom observations, (c) to administer yearly norm-reference tests for special education referrals and End-Of-Year (EOY) reviews, (d) to coordinate and develop

Individualized Educational Programs (IEP), (e) to provide teacher inservice training for special education, and (f) to serve on the junior high Teacher Assistant Team (TAT).

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The junior high regular classroom teachers, parents, and special education students do not actively participate in the decision-making process when the student's individualized education plan (IEP) is developed. This is in direct violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990. IDEA mandates that input shall be solicited from all individuals who are involved in the handicapped student's education. The legislative mandate implementing Public Law 101-476 (P.L. 101-476) states the participants at an IEP conference must include, at least:

- A representative of the public agency, other than the child's teacher, who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, special education.
- The child's teacher.
- One or both of the child's parents, subject to § 300.345..
- The child, if appropriate
- Other individuals at the discretion of the parent or agency (§ 300.344 (a)).

The problem deals with improving the IEP process through greater involvement from the regular classroom teacher, parent, and student in the decision-making process and IEP development. To give the reader a better understanding of the existing problem, the writer feels an overall description of the current special education program needs to be explained. The special education program operates on a resource room concept whereby students receive instruction in the resource room on a daily basis and are able to spend the majority of the day in the mainstream with their peers. Currently, in the writer's workplace, 21 of the 24 students spend the majority of the day in the regular classroom environment. Table I shows a breakdown of the writer's current student population along with the students' resource room subjects (area of disability) and their mainstreamed classes. Table I shows that three 6th-grade students are in the resource room for all core academics (reading, language, math, science, and social studies) and are mainstreamed for the elective areas (computer education, art, physical education, and music). The seventh grade students are divided into two categories; 8 classified as learning disabled (LD) and one classified as emotionally disabled (ED). The 10 eighth grade students are all classified as LD. A breakdown of the 8th-grade students

Table I

Breakdown of the Resource Student's Placement by Grade Level, Number of Students, Deficit, Resource Classes, and Percent of Time Mainstreamed

Grade	Students	Deficits	Math	Reading Language	Math Reading Language	Extended Resource	% Of Time Mainstreamed
6	3	LD	-	-	-	3	15%
6	1	LD		1	-	-	71%
6	1	LD	-	-	-	-	100%
7	4	LD	-	4	-	-	71%
7	1	ED	-	-	1	-	57%
7	4	LD	-	-	4	-	57%
8	3	LD	-	-	-	-	100%
8	1	LD	1	-	-	-	86%
8	3	LD		3	-	-	71%
8	3	LD	-	-	3	-	57%
Total	24		1	8	8	3	

shows that 1 is in the resource room for math only, 3 for reading and language, 3 for math, reading, and language, and 3 students are totally mainstreamed. The results reported in Table I clearly show that the majority of the resource students' school day is spent in mainstream education. This effort by the school district to mainstream students supports the mandated least restrictive environment (LRE) component in P.L.101-475. The LRE mandate in P.L. 101-476 clearly states:

> That to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled (§ 300.550(1)).

Many educators and parents associate mainstreaming with LRE. However, they have two separate definitions. In fact, the term "mainstreaming" is not mentioned in P.L.101-476 by itself (Stephens, Blackhurst, and Majliocca, 1988). Any placement decision that is made following the P.L.101-476 mandates is done so considering the LRE as a primary consideration for the student. This includes all related services such as transportation, speech, physical therapy, counseling, etc.

Problem Documentation

The problem areas that relate to the junior high regular classroom teachers' lack of active participation in the special education program for the mainstreamed student are related to two areas: (1) administrative and (2) special education experience and/or training for the regular classroom teachers. In the administrative area, the regular classroom teachers are not actively encouraged to participate in the decision-making process and IEP development. As a result, most teachers do not attend the IEP conferences thus prohibiting them from taking any kind of ownership in the IEP document. Table II shows a breakdown of the junior high regular classroom teachers' college major, minor, additional certification, and regular classroom modifications. The results clearly show that the junior high faculty have limited education and experience with special education.

Table II

Junior High Regular Classroom Teachers' Major(s), Minor(s), Certification(s) (if different than their major and minor areas), and their Currently used Modifications for Mainstreamed Students

College Major	College Minor	Additional Certification	Regular Classroom Modifications (No.) Of Teachers Using Modifications
Elementary Ed.	Biology	Special Ed.	(3) Tests in Resource Room
Counseling	Psychology	Secondary Ed.	(2) Modify Directions
Physical Ed.	Home Econ.	Biology	(1) Cooperative Groups
Library Sci.	History	Home Econ.	(7) Individualized Instruction
Early Child Ed.	Anthropology	Vocational Ed.	(3) Adjusted Grading
Psychology	Political Sci.		(4) Modify Assignments
Art	Social Studies		(1) Reteach Concepts
History	Special Ed.		(1) Modify Curriculum
Biology			(2) Peer-Tutoring
Home Econ.			
Reading			

Another significant administrative area that needs attention concerns the mainstreamed student's IEP and the writing of the student's goals and objectives. Currently, the goals and objectives are developed and written by the resource room teacher and presented to the multidisciplinary team (MDT) for discussion, input, and finalizing during each student's annual IEP conference. This procedure is effective because the special education student attends the resource room for his/her deficit areas and those areas are addressed by the resource room teacher. Currently, with the exception of one student out of the seventh grade and one student out of the eighth grade, all students are mainstreamed daily for science, social studies, computer education, physical education, and art. As shown in Table I, the majority of the students have deficits in reading, language, and arithmetic. As a result, the academic performance in the mainstreamed classes is dramatically affected. The last administrative area that adds to the existing problem relates to the nonrequirement for regular classroom teachers to write and list, on the mainstreamed student's annual IEP, the goals and objectives that the mainstreamed student will achieve in the regular classroom. As noted earlier, the writer services a number of the 6th-grade resource students and all the junior high resource students. Students in the 7th- and 8th-grade change classes and teachers every 47 minutes. Students in the 6th-grade are self-contained for their core curriculum subjects and change classes for computer education, art, physical education, and music instruction throughout the week. This results in exposing the 6th-grade mainstreamed students to a regular classroom curriculum throughout the day.

Table II shows that the junior high regular classroom teachers do make a few modifications in their classroom to accommodate the learning disabled. However, the modifications are not consistent from subject to subject. The results reported in Table II shows that 3 of the 10 junior high teachers reported using "adjusted grading" with their mainstreamed students. Table II also shows only a few teachers are using a modified curriculum, modified assignments, cooperative groups, modified directions, and peer tutoring. Teachers without a background in special education and/or inservice training in special education experience difficulties when it comes to modifying the regular classroom to accommodate their mainstreamed students. Table II shows the academic background of the junior high regular classroom teachers, their major and minor areas of formal education, current state endorsements, and the modifications they currently make to their curriculum and classroom to accommodate the disabled learner. The information from Table II clearly shows that 2 out of 10 junior high regular classroom teachers have training in special education.

Table III shows the number of goals and objectives as listed on the 1993-94 IEPs for junior high special education students. As shown, the regular classroom teachers do not initiate any goals and objectives for the mainstreamed students to accomplish in the regular classroom. This gives a clear indication that the regular classroom teacher is not working towards any particular goals and objectives but instead exposing the mainstreamed student to the regular classroom curriculum. The school district's goals and objectives for the nonhandicapped students, in most instances, are too difficult for the mainstreamed student to achieve. Another area affecting the regular classroom teacher relates to the time special education meetings are scheduled. Scheduling meetings is a difficult task in most, if not all, school districts because there will always be some participants that have conflicting schedules and/or appointments. This is especially true in the writer's school district. The writer's school district is a small rural district located one hour away from a large metropolitan community where the majority of the district teachers reside. In fact, 7 out of the 10 junior high teachers live in the metropolitan area.

Table III

Goals and Objectives for the Junior High Special Education Students in the Resource Room and Regular Classroom During the 1993-94 School Year

Grade	Resource Room		Regular Classroom	
	Number of Goal(s)/Objectives		Number of Goal(s)/Objectives	
6th	6	20	0	0
7th	16	61	0	0
8th	14	56	0	0
Total	50	107	0	0

This results in a scheduling conflict before and after school because of the distance factor. To compensate, special education meetings are held during the school day where the conference time is scheduled to synchronize with teacher planning periods. However, this alternative does not allow enough time for the conference nor does it always allow for the necessary participants to attend. As a result, special education meetings are generally scheduled so the parent (usually the mother as seen in Table IV) can be at school during the resource room teacher's planning period. An exception to this is the end-of-year (EOY) review when meetings are scheduled on a day-long basis over one week. When EOY reviews are held there is a substitute called for the resource room teacher. However, no substitutes are called for the regular classroom teachers resulting in the regular classroom teacher being informed about the new IEP following the conference. This lack of direct involvement on the part of the regular classroom teacher results in a feeling of "no ownership" in the mainstreamed student's IEP and educational outcome. As noted in Table II 8 out of the 10 junior high regular classroom teachers are without formal special education training. This lack of training, whether college classes, inservice training or exposure results in confusion on the part of the regular classroom teacher as to how they should interact with special education students and their specialists. Limited experience with special education also affects the amount and type of modifications the regular classroom teacher makes within the classroom. Limited special education classes and/or special education inservice training also limits the regular classroom teacher's understanding of P.L. 101-476 and how it applies to the education of handicapped students and the regular classroom environment.

Table IV

Participants Attending Junior High Special Education IEP Conferences and the Amount of Input

Grade	Conferences Held	Students In Attendance	In Attendance Mother/Father/Both			Parent Input	Reg. Class Teacher Attending/Input	
6th	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
7th	6	0	5	1	0	1	0	0
8th	8	1	5	0	3	3	2	0
Total	*16	1	12	1	3	5	2	0

Note. Five out of 16 families are single parent families

The problems relating to the parents taking a more active role in their child's special education can be placed in the following three categories: (1) conference structure; (2) legislation; and (3) education, experience, and/or exposure. Obstacles relating to conference structure can be attributed to scheduling, uncertainty with conference content, no conference agenda, and the roles of each conference participant. As mentioned in the teacher section, scheduling of the meetings is a major conflict. Most of the conflict is on the part of the father as shown in Table IV. Also, as noted earlier, IEP conferences have been scheduled during the school day making it difficult, or impossible, for both parents to be in attendance. As mentioned earlier, the writer's school district is located in a rural area of the southwestern United States with limited employment opportunities. Outside the community, the closest employment available is in another small rural mining town 30 minutes away. Greater employment opportunities exist in a metropolitan community which is more than an hour away. As a result, the distance factor contributes to the scheduling problem for both parents. Table IV shows 12 out of the 16 IEP conferences were attended by one parent (mother).

Another problem contributing to the parents not taking a more active role in their child's special education program is the uncertainty of what to expect at the conference. This is because parents are only formally invited to school once a year to participate in the student's annual IEP conference. This once-a-year formal invitation keeps the parents uninformed about the school, special programs, teachers, and procedures. The parents' lack of exposure to the school and their child's special education program is compounded by the fact that the school does not have preconference training and/or preconference information to acquaint parents with the IEP, their needed input, and means for accountability. Also, not having an agenda for the IEP conference that provides the parents with easy reference also keeps the parents in a state of uncertainty as to what will be discussed next.

Limited legislative knowledge also creates an obstacle for parents. Parents are unaware of the legislative implications of P.L. 101-476 as they relate to parental rights, responsibilities and the special education process. As a result, the parents generally take a passive role during the IEP conference. As shown in Table IV, parents had input in 5 out of 16 ECY reviews last May. All the input and concerns by parents related to the child's academics verses stating goals and objectives.

Limited education, experience, and/or exposure on the part of the parents accounts for the remaining parental obstacles. A parent with limited knowledge about the special education process is likely to agree with most recommendations made by school officials during the IEP conference. Limited knowledge and lack of inservice training in special education cause parents to misunderstand their role as a vital member of the multidisciplinary team (MDT). They do not realize that they have the same rights as the other professionals on the MDT. As mentioned earlier, parents receive only one official invitation a year to come to school and be an active participant in the annual IEP review. More often than not, other contacts or invitations to come to the school are associated with some negative situation. This type of school/parent contact usually creates a negative environment for parents when they do arrive on campus. In actuality, parents are strangers in the school environment creating a somewhat apprehensive atmosphere at the beginning of any meeting and/or conference.

For the writer to get a clearer understanding of the parents' knowledge regarding the special education process, special education legislation, and special education terminology, the writer surveyed the parents with a Parent Questionnaire (Appendix A). The Parent Questionnaire was designed to get an overview of the parents' knowledge on special education as well as to see if the parents were interested in receiving information and/or inservice training in the special education process and IEP development. The results of the Parent Questionnaire were encouraging for the writer. The results from the questionnaire clearly showed that the parents have limited knowledge regarding the special education process, special education legislation, and special education terminology. The questionnaire also showed that the parents unanimously supported the idea of receiving inservice training in the special education process, parental rights, and responsibilities. Also, parents were enthusiastic about getting actively involved in the decision-making process and IEP development. The idea of having greater parent, teacher, and school communication and preconference information was also supported.

The students' lack of active involvement in their special education program stems from many of the same obstacles as their parents. The students' obstacles can be linked to the following three areas: (1) conference structure; (2) limited legislative knowledge; and (3) education, experience, and conference exposure. As shown in Table IV, out of last year's 16 EOY reviews, only 1 student attended his or her IEP conference.

It is not an uncommon practice to exclude students from attending their IEP conference. Even though P.L. 101-476 includes the child as a participant, whenever appropriate. Students at the junior high school level are rarely invited to participate in the decision-making process and IEP development (Stephens, Blackhurst, and Majliocca, 1988). The reason for this could be attributed to the school and parents viewing the student as a recipient of information verses a participant/recipient with information to provide.

Students and parents are not aware of the fact or that the law allows and encourages the student to be an equal and active participant in the decision-making process and IEP development. However, students at the junior high level, without training, do not have the ability to walk into an IEP conference surrounded by a roomful of professionals and actively participate. Without some training junior high students do not possess the skills to be an effective participant. This is because junior high students are not familiar with the special education process, how to propose goals and/or objectives, or how to suggest what environment and/or materials would best fit their unique needs and learning style. Despite all these obstacles for the student, their participation is necessary and valuable to the multidisciplinary team (MDT), decision-making process, and IEP document. The whole premise underlying P.L. 101-476 is the education of disabled students in their LRE. However, since 1977 when Public Law 94-142 was implemented and reauthorized in 1990 by P.L.101-476, we still continue to overlook the student as a necessary and valuable participant of the MDT. Student participation is important because parents do not necessarily always represent the student's best short- and long-term interests, wants, and needs.

During the writer's years of observing and participating in the decision-making process and IEP development, the writer has formulated the following 12 reasons for the incidental representation and lack of active participation by regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the IEP process: (1) regular classroom teachers do not have ownership in the IEP process and outcomes because they are not required to list the goals and objectives that the mainstreamed students will achieve in the regular classroom; (2) regular classroom teachers do not receive inservice training on the legislation (P.L.101-476) requiring them to attend and be an active participant in the decision-making process and IEP development; (3) junior high IEP conferences are held at an inappropriate time to allow both parents to attend; (4) parents of junior high special education students do not receive training in the decision-making process and IEP development; (5) parents of junior high special education students do not receive preconference information for possible input into the IEP development; (6) parents of junior high special education students do not have ownership in the IEP document; (7) junior high students are not aware of the legislation that allows them to be an active participant, whenever appropriate, at the IEP conference; (8) junior high students do not receive instruction on how they can have input into the IEP development; (9) junior high students are not aware that they have a right to materials, equipment, and methods that will enable them to be a more effective learner; (10) junior high students do not realize their personal input is a needed and valuable component of the decision-making process and IEP development; (11) junior high students do not realize that taking an active role in their IEP development will provide them with a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement; and (12) junior high students do not realize that by taking an active role in the development of their IEP will enhance their decision-making skills and help them develop personal responsibility. Any of these reasons taken separately would not create much of a dilemma for the junior high student's special education process but combined they do result in keeping the regular classroom teacher, parent, and student from participating in the decision-making process and IEP development.

After the writer reviewed the current junior high IEPs, the writer discovered the following evidence relating to the limited participation by regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development: (a) no junior high special education students attended their IEP conferences, (b) one eighth grade student attended her EOY transition IEP conference to high school, (c) parents provided input in 3 of the 16 junior high IEP conferences, (d) a single parent attended 13 out of the 16 junior high IEP conferences, and (e) none of the 16 junior high IEP conferences had input from the student (with the exception of the eighth grade students' EOY transition IEP conference to high school). This data is alarming to the writer and is the foundation of this practicum.

Causative Analysis

The limited participation by the regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development is attributed to four teacher obstacles, five parent obstacles, and eight student obstacles. The regular classroom teachers' obstacles are: (1) the junior high IEP conferences are generally held at a time when regular classroom teachers are in class or otherwise unavailable; (2) the regular classroom teachers are not required, by administrative means, to attend and actively participate in IEP conferences for their mainstreamed students; (3) the regular classroom teachers are not required to initiate mainstream goals and objectives for the student's annual IEP; and (4) the regular classroom teachers are not required to list the modifications that they will make within their classroom to accommodate their mainstreamed students.

The parents' obstacles are: (1) the parents are not knowledgeable of their role and responsibility in the decision-making process as it relates to their child's special education program and IEP development, (2) the parents are not familiar with the legislation surrounding PL 101-476 that gives them the right to have equal say in their child's decision-making process and the IEP development, (3) the parents are not provided with preconference information to help prepare them to become active participants in the decision-making process and the IEP development, (4) the parents do not have a communication procedure to follow for effective communication, and (5) the IEP conferences are held at a time when only one parent is available to attend.

The students' obstacles are: (1) the junior high students are not invited to their IEP conferences, (2) the school officials and parents do not feel that the students would benefit from attending their IEP conference, (3) the school officials and parents do not feel students have enough to offer in the development of their IEP, (4) the junior high students are not aware of the legislation (PL 101-476) that gives them the right to be an active participant in the decision-making process and in the development of their IEP, (5) the junior high students are not aware of the IEP process and how the IEP document is used by the resource room teacher to further their education, (6) the junior high students are not aware that they have the legal right to be an active participant in the decision-making process and in their

IEP development, (7) the junior high students do not have the ability or knowledge to plan for their academic future, and (8) the junior high students are not prepared for nor do they know what to expect when they attend an IEP conference.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of literature was completed to determine the reasons why junior high regular classroom teachers, parents, and students do not take a more active role in the decision-making process when IEPs are developed for special education students. The writer's preliminary review of literature revealed the following problem areas. Weisenfeld (1986) reviewed 41 district IEPs and found that the regular classroom teachers were only in attendance at 2 of the conferences. As a result, Weisenfeld found the school district in noncompliance of P.L. 94-142 for teacher attendance at IEP conferences.

Katsiyannis and Ward (1992) report in their research that parents do not attend IEP meetings because of scheduling conflicts, transportation problems, and negative school experiences. MacMillan (1988) reported some parents have trouble at IEP conferences because of the emotional pain they may be feeling thus stopping them from attending on an active basis. Fleming and Fleming (1987) suggested that limited student involvement could be attributed to the Supreme Court's decision that upheld the state's rights to restrict the right to involve children in the IEP process even though they have the same constitutional rights as adults.

During a random sampling of a 100 IEPs to see how regular classroom teachers were involved in the IEP progress Nevin, Semmel, and McCann (1983) reported the following results: (1) nearly 50% of all the special education students received instruction in the regular classroom with the regular classroom teacher being responsible for their instruction (2) only 24% of the modifications that were done within the regular classroom were actually incorporated into student IEPs, and (3) regular classroom teachers do not actively participate in the IEP process.

Out of the 74 teachers, Nevin, Semmel, and McCann surveyed, only 23 had a copy of the mainstreamed student's IEP. Out of those 23 teachers, only two of them were actually integrating its contents into the mainstreamed student's daily instruction. They reported that many of the teachers' surveyed felt they lacked direction on how to interact with the school specialists and how to become more involved in the IEP process. As a result, the regular classroom teachers relied on informal contact with the special education personnel to implement student IEP. Nevin, Semmel, and McCann concluded by saying the regular classroom teachers surveyed felt the education of special education students lies with the special education teachers and not the regular classroom teacher. The regular classroom teachers also reported that they are not aware of the Federal legislation such as P.L. 94-142 and how it affects them. A few teachers cited their lack of involvement was because the administration excluded them from the IEP process.

Sklarz (1991) researched and reported on several areas that can prohibit regular classroom teachers from having a feeling of ownership in the IEP process. His research shows that regular classroom teachers are not being included when it comes to determining which educational approach is the best for special education students nor are they being allowed to have input into the design of the IEP. The author's research also shows that the regular classroom teachers are not being provided effective inservice training nor are they given an opportunity to decide what inservice training they need to better their knowledge and skills regarding the mainstreamed student. The research also pointed out that the regular classroom teachers are not being allowed to observe other classrooms and/or teachers who work successfully with mainstreamed students nor are they encouraged to show their colleagues successful instructional techniques that work with mainstreamed students. Sklarz concluded his research by noting that many regular classroom teachers do not have access to current journals in the school's professional library on special education that can assist them in finding needed intervention that works with the disabled learner. The 1993 National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) revealed potential problems that regular classroom teachers face while educating the specific learning disabled (SLD) student in the regular classroom. Their findings reported more than 90% of students with SLDs are taught in the regular classroom for some part of their school day. This finding only compounds the regular classroom teachers' responsibilities. Regular classroom teachers are being required to deal with a multitude of factors including an increase in the number of students with cultural backgrounds, developmental delays, social problems, and multiple disabilities. The NJCLD reported that the regular classroom teachers are not prepared to deal with this ever-changing classroom population. Many regular classroom teachers feel they do not have the flexibility needed to modify the prescribed classroom curriculum to meet the needs of the special education student nor do they have the required support services to meet the unique needs of mainstreamed students. All of this results in the regular classroom teacher not being provided with the time needed to adequately plan for and evaluate the LD student's progress.

Smith (1990) researched the contents of individualized education programs over the past decade and reported inadequacies and passive compliance with P.L. 94-142. He found that many regular classroom teachers are not using the IEP in the regular classroom as a functional instructional tool. Instead, IEPs are being used as a general reference instead of as a guide to educational planning. Smith pointed out this could be a result of the administration not insisting that the regular classroom teachers actively participate in the IEP process. Currently, the regular classroom teacher's role in educating mainstreamed students is not defined in the IEP nor are the modifications that the regular classroom teacher needs to make within their classroom. The author also reported that regular classroom teachers are not provided inservice training in the IEP process. Smith also looked at the regular classroom teacher's role at the IEP conference and reported that regular classroom teachers who attend the IEP meeting do so in a superficial manner. He noted regular classroom teachers are ranked high as a necessary participant at the IEP conferences but they are ranked low in contributing input to the IEP. The important ingredient in Smith's research is that when regular classroom teachers do not actively participate in the development of the IEP they are not meeting the intent of P.L. 94-142 and the disabled student is the one who suffers.

Wohlman and McDonald (1989) pointed out some of the obstacles related to the regular classroom teacher's involvement in the IEP process. They reported that regular classroom teachers do not realize their experience and expertise is respected and welcomed by the special education specialists. Educating the special education student requires a commitment from the regular classroom teachers and the special education teachers and it is not the sole responsibility of the resource room teacher. The regular classroom teacher feels the IEP is not written in a way that implies the special education student's education is a shared responsibility between the regular and special education teachers. Getting the regular classroom teacher to attend the IEP meeting is another obstacle. Many IEP meetings are held during the school day and Wohlman and McDonald suggest providing the regular classroom teachers with substitutes for their class so they can actively participate during school hours. They also report that to make the IEP a useful document regular classroom teachers need to be inserviced on how to integrate the IEP into their lesson plans. Any inservice training that improves the skills of the regular classroom teacher will be valued because the duties regular classroom teachers have now do not leave them with enough time to be actively involved in all the decision-making process surrounding the IEP development.

Vacc, Vallecorsa, Parker, Bonner, Lester, Richardson, and Yates (1985) researched the parents' participation in the IEP conference and reported their findings. Out of the 47 IEPs they reviewed parents played an active role in 11 of them. Of those 11 IEPs, academics and social functioning were the topics covering most input. Out of the 47 conferences both parents were present at six of them. The reasons they reported this lack of participation related to scheduling conflicts and, in addition, most parents felt their role at the IEP meeting was one of recipients of information verses participants.

Hughes and Ruhl (1987) looked into the obstacles relating to parental contacts by special education teachers and reported many teachers lack the appropriate training to effectively work and communicate with parents. When teachers do communicate the reason is generally negative verses just keeping the parents aware of their child's progress. They reported that parents do not have any type of home-school cooperative agreement that keeps the parents actively involved in their child's education while he/she is way from school. The teachers feel that is associated with the lack of parental cooperation because parent groups are not used to promoting collaborative strategies between the parent and teacher. Hughes' and Ruhl's report on the IEP conference said parents are not comfortable with the formal way the school communicates their children's progress and evaluation results. They reported parents do not have results explained to them in descriptive and nonjargon terms.

Gerber, Banbury, and Miller (1986) researched special educators' perception as to why parental involvement in the IEP process is limited and reported the following: (1) the parents are not provided with an outline explaining their role and responsibility during the IEP process, (2) the parent's decision-making is limited during the IEP process because of existing professional attitudes regarding shared decision-making, (3) the parents feel that school officials encourage them to be passive participants during the IEP conference, and (4) the parents lack knowledge when it comes to taking a more active role in the decision-making process and IEP development. The authors' survey shows parents are rated high as IEP participants in the IEP conference but they are rated low as to their influence and contribution to the decision-making process during IEP conferences. The survey also shows 57% percent of the parents surveyed felt their participation has little merit during the IEP conference, 44% percent of the parents surveyed felt the IEP conference was nothing more than a school formality, and 54% percent of the parents surveyed felt the school district lacked in providing parents with preconference training.

Vaughn, Bos, Harrell, and Lasky (1988) investigated parent's participation in the IEP conference and their understanding of the decision-making process and revealed the following results. Out of the 26 conferences surveyed mothers attended 16, fathers attended 3, and both parents attended 7. Verbal interaction by parents during the IEP conference accounted for 15% of the total conference time. When the 15% was analyzed, 8% accounted for comments by parents, 6% accounted for parents responding, and 1% accounted for parents asking questions during the conference. When parents were asked to explain "learning disabilities," 27% described it as meaning a slow learner or a child that was not learning as well as the other students in their class. All of these results support the authors' presumption that parents have limited knowledge about the decision-making process and IEP development.

The research by Brinckerhoff and Vincent (1986) revealed the difficulties involved with increasing parental involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development. They reported that parents lack preconference training which results in them providing little input towards the IEP decision-making process. Their research also suggests "parents" really meant "mother" because of the time IEP conferences are usually scheduled which does not allow both parents to attend. In the Brinckerhoff and Vincent study the results showed that parents without preconference training generated only two goals during seven IEP conferences.

Bos and Vaughn (1994) focused their research on involving LD students with behavioral problems in the IEP process. One of the major concerns involved the parents not being aware that P.L. 94-142 encourages students to participate in the IEP process, whenever appropriate. Students themselves were hesitant to attend the IEP conference because they do not know how to participate in the IEP conference. The authors' reported that students hesitated to attend their IEP conference because they were afraid the conversation would focus around their poor performance in school. They said students do not receive training on how to participate in the IEP process therefore making it less likely that students will become involved.

Research by Shea and Bauer (1991) focused on parents and teachers of children with exceptionalities and revealed the difficulties student's face when they do not participate in the decision-making process and the development of their IEP. Students who are not involved in the IEP process are less likely to learn the techniques needed to make responsible decisions. Students who do not attend their IEP conferences only hear of the decisions secondhand resulting in misinterpretation of the outcome and results. The research also showed that when students do attend their IEP conference they tend to inhibit their parent's behavior causing a less productive meeting. When a student does not attend their IEP conference a reported result has been that the student takes less pride in his/her academic achievement.

Peters (1990) researched the student as an overlooked part in the IEP process and reported several reasons associated with that dilemma. The research reported a major obstacle depriving students from active participation in their IEP conference was because they do not receive preconference training that can provide them with the skills necessary to actively participate. Peters also reported that students have a tendency to become bored during the long presentation of data at IEP conferences. Boredom combined with the fact that adults are reluctant to address students directly through maintained eye contact allows a student to lose his or her concentration. This results in the students not getting the opportunity to ask questions and request clarity when they are uncertain about information presented or proposed. The author concludes by saying that many school officials and parents view students as recipients of special services verses participants.

Student motivation was the emphasis of Van Reusen and Bos (1994) research and they revealed how it can effect student participation in the IEP . They found student do not have the motivation to participate because of the following reasons: (a) students are not taught strategies for effective participation in their IEP conference, (b) students do not receive preconference training on how to generate their own IEP goals and objectives, (c) students lack the strategies necessary to motivate them to become an active IEP participant, and (d) students do not have the communication skills necessary to communicate effectively during the IEP conference.

Adelman, MacDonald, Nelson, Smith, and Taylor (1990) researched the area of student motivation and the obstacles relating to why students are not motivated to participate in the psychoeducational decision-making process. Their research reported that one of the primary factors is related the lack of student training that can cause students to become motivated towards active participation on the IEP team. They also reported that many students are reluctant to deal with their own problems which ultimately results in the student developing an anti-involvement attitude towards dealing with their own intervention. Some of the authors' research suggests that students are not provided with preparatory sessions aimed at motivational strategies that will encourage them to take an active interest in their personal academic planning. Their research also points out that parents of special education students do not understand the importance of having their child involved in the decision-making process and the development of their IEP. They said child involvement is important because it can have both short- and long-range ramifications for the child's future.

Research by Fleming and Fleming (1987) reported some of the difficulties of involving minors in the special education decision-making process. The authors' reported that research has shown that students can be harmed by their involvement in the decision-making process. Their exposure increases the student's awareness of personal deficits and the implications of diagnostic labeling. The authors' reported that many students do not have first-hand knowledge about the things that would be best for them which results in the student taking a passive role in the process. Research suggests that the parents and school officials are more likely to decide among themselves if a student should be involved in his/her decision-making process without consulting the student. They reported that quick decisions regarding a child's participation are inappropriate because the decision should include, but not be limited to, the student's age, social class, and personality type. These areas are sometimes overlooked and can result in possible harmful effects to the student.

Taylor and Adelman (1986) researched the area of students making decisions that will affect them personally. They reported that most students are viewed by their parents and school officials as being incompetent to make decisions that affect them and feel that involving them in the decision-making would be a fruitless effort and a waste of time. Many parents and school officials feel the risks for involving a student in making decisions that will affect them personally outweigh the benefits for involving the student. They report that when students are coerced into participating in the decision-making process the results are generally counterproductive. Some students are inhibited when it comes to sharing their wants and needs with parents and school officials and may decline the initial invitation to participate. Parents and school officials should not take a student's initial rejection of an invitation to participate seriously because many students will respond negatively but honestly would like to be involved in the process.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goal and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to improve the individualized education program (IEP) by increasing the active involvement of the junior high regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development.

Expected Outcomes

There were 10 expected outcomes involved in this practicum:

1. The junior high regular classroom teachers of students with disabilities will attend and actively participate in the IEP conferences;

2. The junior high regular classroom teachers will initiate goal(s) and objectives for the mainstreamed students in their regular classroom. The annual goal(s) and objectives focus on what the regular classroom teacher wants the student to accomplish during the year while in the regular classroom;

3. The junior high regular classroom teachers will list on their student's annual IEP the modifications that they will make within the regular classroom to accommodate the mainstreamed student's unique learning needs and style. The primary areas for regular classroom modifications will focus on: (a) environment, (b) instructional, (c) materials, and (d) grading;

4. The junior high regular classroom teachers will complete a semester progress report on each of their mainstreamed students;

5. The parents of junior high resource room students will be more knowledgeable of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990. Providing the parents of junior high resource room students with a working knowledge of IDEA enables them to have a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities regarding the special education process;

6. The parents of junior high resource students will understand their role in the decision-making process and the development of their child's IEP;

7. Both parents of junior high resource room students will attend their child's IEP conference;

8. The parents of junior high special education students will be active participants in their child's academic, behavioral, and social development, at school and home;

9. All junior high IEP participants will sign the IEP document;

10. The junior high special education students will become active participants in the decision-making process and in the development of their IEP, whenever appropriate. The student's active participation will include, but will not be limited to, initiating some of their goals and objectives, requesting particular classroom materials and/or supplies, and suggesting classroom environmental conditions that are favorable to their unique learning needs and style.

Measurement of Outcomes

Participants attending junior high IEP conferences have a vested interest in the student for whom the IEP is being developed. To ensure an accurate accounting of all junior high IEP conference participants, each participant in attendance will sign the IEP Signature Page (Appendix B). The writer will review the IEP signature page of each junior high resource student's IEP to determine if this occurred. This procedure should occur 100% of the time.

A new and important process involved in this practicum focused on having the junior high regular classroom teachers initiate annual goal(s) and objectives for each mainstreamed student while they are in the regular classroom. The regular classroom teachers use a Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modification Form (Appendix C) to record at least one initiated goal and two supporting objectives for each goal. The same form is used to list the modification(s) made within the regular classroom for each resource student. The writer will review the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modification Form of each student's IEP to determine the regular classroom teacher's involvement. All the junior high teachers of students with disabilities in their class will follow this procedure.

Following each semester, the regular classroom teacher fills out a Regular Classroom Teacher's Semester Progress Report Form (Appendix D). The semester progress report follows a similar format as the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Modification Form (Appendix C). The progress report is design so the regular classroom teacher has a quick and accurate way of establishing what progress each mainstreamed student made during the semester while in the regular classroom. At the end of each semester, the writer will check each student's file to see if all the regular classroom teachers completed a semester progress report on each of their mainstreamed students.

A Parent Questionnaire (Appendix A) was used at the beginning of the practicum to collect baseline data from the parents. The baseline data focused on the parents' understanding of special education legislation, parents' rights and responsibilities in special education, and parent involvement in their child's special education program. A comparison of the pre /and postquestionnaire (Appendix A) will show the improvement in the parent's understanding and the success of this practicum. The writer will be looking for a 90% improvement in parent knowledge of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990 and their role in the decision-making process and the development of their child's IEP.

The writer will review the IEP Signature Page (Appendix B) of each student's IEP to determine the number of IEP conferences that both parents attended. The writer will be looking for a fifty percent increase in both parents' attending their child's IEP conference when compared to conferences before this practicum. These results will be presented in table form.

The parents of junior high special education students will be active participants in their child's academic, behavioral, and social development at school and home. The "Parent Input" section on last year's IEPs will be compared to this year's IEPs to determine the amount of input the parents had for this practicum. The writer will include the information the parents provided on their new Parent(s) Goals and Home Intervention Form (Appendix E). These results will be presented in table form. The writer anticipates having a 95% increase in parent participation during their child's IEP conference.

All junior high IEP participants will sign the IEP document. Since many junior high teachers and other multidisciplinary team (MDT) participants are unable to attend IEP conferences for various reasons, the new Signature Page (Appendix B) indicates the type of involvement each participant played in the decision-making process and IEP development. On the IEP Signature Page, each MDT member signs the document indicating their type of involvement by using the following letter codes: (1) "P" represents the participant was "present" at the IEP conference, (2) "C" represents the participant was "consulted" prior to the IEP conference, and (3) "R" represents the participant has "read" the IEP document and understands its contents. The writer will review the Signature Page on each junior high student's IEP to determine the type of involvement of each participant. The writer anticipated that all the participants at junior high IEP conferences would sign the Signature Page and indicate their involvement by recording a "P" for present, "C" for consulted, or an "R" for having read the IEP document and understands its contents.

All junior high special education students will become active participants in the decision-making process and in the development of their IEP, whenever appropriate. The writer will review each Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form (Appendix E) for student input to determine each student's level of involvement. Since this was the inaugural year for student participation in their IEP process, the amount and type of input the students had in developing their IEP cannot be compared to other years. However, the amount and type of input for this year will be presented in table form. The writer anticipates that all the students at the junior high level will participate in their decision-making process and in the development of their IEP, whenever appropriate.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The junior high regular classroom teachers, parents of junior high special education students, and the students do not actively participate in the decision-making process and the development of individualized education plans (IEP). A review of the literature offers several ideas for solutions towards providing intervention to correct this problem and improve participants' participation in the special education process as mandated in Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Public Law 94-142 is the legislation that mandated equal protection and due process for handicapped children in the public school setting. P.L. 94-142 was reauthorized by congress in 1986. The reauthorization was named the Education of the Handicapped Act, Public Law 99-457. On October 30, 1990, additional amendments were made to P.L. 94-142. These amendments are known as Public Law 99-457 (P.L. 99-457) and changed the law from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act to the Americans with Disabilities Act (IDEA). As a result, the next decade will bring many critical changes to the 43 million Americans with disabilities. These changes will have a major influence on society and its neighborhood schools. Many of the existing barriers that currently prohibit teachers, parents, and students from taking a more active role in the decision-making process will need to be changed and/or modified. Greater cooperation, coordination, and communication between all parties involved in a disabled person's education and future will become a way of life for our society as a whole. Increased cooperation, coordination, and communication are already being felt as a result of the paradigm shift in regular and special education and the push towards full inclusion; educating all handicapped children in the regular classroom (Stainback and Stainback, 1990).

Full inclusion has gained considerable support over the past few years and is supported in current research (Lilly, 1987; Pugach, 1988; Pugach and Lilly, 1984; Reynolds, 1988; Will, 1986). These authors support the inclusive education model that is based on the premise that: (1) handicapped students enrich the educational system, (2) handicapped students do not require a miracle-cure receipt before effective functioning can occur, (3) handicapped students can and will benefit from the regular classroom teacher, and (4) any changes to the environment to accommodate handicapped students will benefit nonhandicapped students as well. However, opponents to full inclusion (Hallahan, Keller, McKinney, Lloyd and Bryan, 1988; Kauffman, 1988; Keogh, 1988; Lloyd, Crowley, Kohler and Strain, 1988) say inclusion does not provide the handicapped student with his/her least restrictive environment (LRE). Despite all the rhetoric from both sides of the full inclusion theory the fact remains, more than 90% of the specific learning disabled (SLD) population receives some of their education in the regular classroom for part of the day (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD]) This statistic is the primary reason the writer is working to improve the IEP process by increasing the active involvement of the regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in all phases of the special education process and IEP development.

The NJCLD suggests several recommendations for improving the regular classroom teacher's involvement. Some of their recommendations include: (a) developing a school-based plan outlining the responsibilities of the regular classroom teacher, special educators, parents, and students; (b) establishing and promoting a collaborative relationship between school officials, parents, and students; (c) establishing an instructional environment that meets the needs of the disabled learner; (d) ensuring the participation by the regular classroom teacher in the development of the mainstreamed student's IEP; (e) providing inservice training for all school personnel to improve their skills and knowledge for working with the disabled learner; (f) providing inservice training for teachers regarding their participation on the multidisciplinary team (MDT); and (g) parent and/or family collaboration. The NJCLD realizes this could be difficult for a school district to achieve but if the district is truly going to meet the needs of the disabled learner in the regular classroom they need to make some concessions.

The NJCLD idea regarding a collaborative relationship between school officials, parents, and students establishes an environment that meets the needs of the disabled learner. It also ensures the participation by the regular classroom teacher in the development of the mainstreamed student's IEP and could easily be integrated into the solution's strategy for this practicum.

Sklarz (1991) reported on several ways to increase the regular classroom teacher's involvement in the special education process and to improve their instructional skills for educating the disabled learner in the mainstream. Sklarz feels that teachers need to have the leverage and flexibility to design their own instructional program. The writer is considering having the regular classroom teacher take a more instrumental role in the IEP development. To promote this, Sklarz suggests improving the teacher's skill through: (a) short-term sabbaticals, (b) having schools develop a substitute-teacher pool, (c) peer-coaching, (d) weekend and/or summer workshops, and (e) improving the on-campus professional library. Sklarzs suggest school districts start slowly to ease the cost involved with implementing some of these suggestions. In the writer's school district no policy exists that supports teacher's sabbaticals because of the financial burden to the district. However, to assist teachers, the writer could promote having the district develop a peer-coaching program using teachers who work successfully with mainstreamed students to help those who may feel they need some assistance. As Sklarz suggested, the writer could encourage the district to put more emphasis on teacher inservice training in the area of special education and the mainstreamed student. The writer could offer teacher inservice training during teacher inservice days.

In the area of IEP development, Smith's (1990) research focused on how to use the IEP in the instructional setting of the resource room. Although Smith's solutions are designed for the resource setting, the writer believes they can be directly implemented to the regular classroom setting and integrated into the regular classroom teacher instructional methods. This is important because in the writer's school district, the resource students spend the majority of their school day in a regular classroom environment. Smith points out that P. L. 94-142 intended to have the IEP provide teachers with a formalized instructional plan. Since the student's IEP is designed to be a formalized instructional plan, this provides an excellent opportunity to have the regular classroom teacher directly involved in initiating goals and objectives for the student to achieve in the regular classroom. Smith says IEPs should be the primary component of disabled learners' instruction and "accounts for the students' learning and teachers' teaching" (p. 6). In Smith's research he noted that when regular classroom modifications are stated in the IEP document the regular classroom teacher's role is salient and the modifications are more regularly implemented. Smith states three areas that need to be adhered to in order to improve the regular classroom teacher's role in the special education process: (1) provide more teacher inservice training, (2) provide preservice training for teachers, and (3) provide administrative enforcement of involvement. Many of Smith's ideas would directly support the success of the writer's practicum; especially his points about using the IEP as the instructional plan and having it contain the modification that will be made within the regular classroom.

In the writer's school district, all but four of the junior high resource students are mainstreamed for science, social studies, computer education, physical education, and art. As a result, when the disabled learner is mainstreamed for these subject areas they are challenged constantly to keep up with the nondisabled learner and the regular classroom curriculum and the instructional pace. In the writer's experience, most of the junior high teachers see the mainstream students as disabled only when they are in the resource room receiving assistance. This is another reason the writer is promoting an increase in the regular classroom teacher's active involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development.

An IEP is a document written to guide the disabled learner through his or her education (Wohlman and McDonald, 1989). That is why Wohlman and McDonald say the regular classroom teacher "must" be actively involved in the IEP development. They emphasize that a student's IEP directly states the student's strengths and weaknesses with supporting goals and objectives. Regular classroom teachers need to realize that the student's disability applies across the curriculum and includes a student's related services and the instructional content within a mainstreamed classroom.

Stephens, Blackhurst, and Magliocca (1988) state that the parents are the primary caregivers and educators for their children. The parents are also a legitimate member of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) and a partner in the decision-making process and IEP development. The intent of P.L. 94-142 is to give the parent the opportunity to be a team member so they have the opportunity to ask questions, observe the IEP process, and provide important information relating to their child's education, at school and at home. Stephens, Blackhurst, and Magliocca reported that parents have an official role and must be afforded the opportunity to contribute in the assessment process and suggest options for their child's learning environment. However, to enable parents to become a contributing partner on the MDT they must first understand the special education process. These authors did not suggest inservice training for parents, but the writer believes this is an important and necessary way to improve a parent's understanding of the special education process.

The research by Smith (1990) revealed that one of the central reasons behind P.L. 94-142 is parental involvement in the IEP. This author points out that without the parents the law's intent is not being fulfilled. He says just having the parents "attend the IEP conference" falls short of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) intent. The MDT is based on the premise that the child's team will work collaboratively to develop an educational program that meets the child's total school needs. Smith does suggest the need for inservice and preservice training for IEP participants. However, the writer supports inservice training for IEP participants as a key towards improving their skills and enabling them to be an effective and active participant in the decision-making process and IEP development. Smith says appropriate training for IEP participants is crucial to the MDT concept, philosophy, and the development of a comprehensive instructional plan.

Gerber, Banbury, Miller, and Griffin (1986) explain that P.L. 94-142 is a vehicle that allows for the sharing of decisions between school officials and parents. In their study they found that 50% of the teachers surveyed felt that involving parents in the IEP conference had merit and that prewriting the IEP negatively affected the parent's participation in the conference. These authors are not saying that legislation prohibits the school from coming prepared to the IEP conference with the child's current level of academic achievement, possible goals and objectives to consider, and recommendations regarding the kind of related services to be provided.

The authors' reported the results of their survey that showed 54% percent of the educators surveyed felt that the school should provide some type of preservice training for IEP participation. From the same survey, the authors' pointed out that the verdict is split on how special educators feel about including the parent in a more active role in the special education process. This is in contrast to the writer's school district where the teacher's support parents taking a more active role in the special education process. The authors' research also shows a need for districts to develop a training program for parents so they can be taught skills that will make them a more effective participant in the IEP process. The writer suggests making parent inservice for special education an annual event, the same as the child's annual IEP review.

Research by Leyser (1985) shows parents are interested in receiving progress reports about their children through different means other than the currently used methods. Parents would like to exchange more information through written messages, notes, and telephone calls. This suggestion gave the writer the idea to develop special memos from the resource room to the parents. The author reported that parents would like the scheduling of meetings to be at a time when both parents can attend. This accommodation will be a priority for this practicum. Parents feel that if schools were truly interested in getting more active participation from the parents they would implement alternative ways to communicate. His research suggests using school transportation to get parents to and from a conference, arrange conferences where babysitters are available, and hold conferences in a neutral (central) location closer to the parents. Leyser says these changes would take the fear and frustration out of the conference process for the parents. In the writer's rural district, holding conferences in a central location closer to the parents is not a problem. In fact, the writer estimates that approximately 70% of the children's parents went to this school.

Brinckerhoff and Vincent (1986) have identified several key areas that could be used as part of the writer's solution strategy. The areas the writer could focus on include: (1) recognizing the parents as the child's natural advocate, (2) recognizing the parents knowledge of the child out of the school environment, and (3) bringing together the child's school and home environment into the IEP. The authors' study demonstrated that training both parents and staff has a positive effect on improving the parents participation during IEP conferences. However, the research did not indicate whether increased parental participation increased the child's academic gains or progress. The writer suggests this would change if the student started to take a more active role in his or her decision-making process and IEP development.

Developing a strong parent-professional partnership for the development of the student's IEP was the focus of Gress' and Carrol's (1985) research. They studied the importance of having school personnel recognize parents and develop a sense of acceptance, trust, and a close interpersonal dialogue with them. By doing this, Gress and Carrol reported that the parent's input increases during the IEP conference. These authors also suggested using a neutral site for IEP conferences. Their theory is that in using a neutral site, parents will not bring preconceived or negative attitudes to the conference like many parents do when conferences are held on the school campus. Gress and Carrol stated that if the conference is held on the school's campus, the school should provide parents with the "red carpet" treatment. Some of their "red carpet" suggestions include providing parents with a comfortable area to wait, refreshments, and a conference room that has a secure environment where participants can easily see and talk to each other. All of these options can improve parental involvement in the IEP process and are under consideration by the writer. Gress and Carrol also suggest that during the IEP conference parents should be provided with paper and pencil for note taking. This is an item the writer is looking closely at for the upcoming IEP conferences. Also, the authors' suggest school personnel using graphs and charts for easy reading and understanding. School officials should also provide the parents with an opportunity to summarize what was presented throughout the conference. By doing this, school officials can be ensured that parents understand the information. These authors' recommend some type of follow-up and/or postconference contact with the parents. This could be in the form of personal contact, telephone call, or a questionnaire. Gress and Carrol encourage school districts to promote a parent support group. They say this is an effective way to build parent confidence and to make parents more comfortable with the special education process. A parental support group, or maybe an advocacy group is an idea the writer is considering. An advocacy group could possibly be implemented through the parent-teacher association.

Special education compliance was the focus of Katsiyannis' and Ward's (1992) research. They studied the compliance issue as it relates to the parent's role in the decision-making process and the IEP development. They reported that parental participation is a primary mechanism under P.L. 94-142 and proposes school districts provide parents with a handbook outlining their rights and responsibilities and procedural safeguards. This suggestion, combined with Gress' and Carrol's (1985) suggestion of a parent advocacy group has provided the writer with some tentative strategies. Katsiyannis and Ward reported that for schools to be in compliance they cannot hold an IEP conference without the parent. If they do convene an IEP conference without the parents, they must have documented proof of their attempts to contact the parents. Katsiyannis and Ward did report that parents do have the right not to participate in the IEP conference. However, research suggests that the parent's participation in the IEP process is directly related the child's improved academics. Following the IEP conference, Katsiyannis and Ward suggest the following activities to keep the parents involved in their child's education: (1) visiting the parents at home, (2) scheduling school and classroom activities that the parents can attend, and (3) instituting reports. The authors' strongly support making sure parents understand their procedural rights. They suggest having the school offer an awareness and/or training program for parents in an attempt to improve their knowledge regarding their procedural rights as outlined in P.L. 94-142. Providing parents with inservice training regarding special education legislation and the parent's rights and responsibilities could be an effective means of improving the parent's overall understanding of special education. Schools may even want to provide advocates to assist parents in the special education process. Katsiyannis and Ward concluded their research by saying that when parents are fully aware of their rights, responsibilities, and role in the IEP process there is improved decision-making and better attendance at the IEP conference.

Improving communication with the parent's will also improve the parent's effectiveness in their child's education program (Nye, Westling, and Laten (1986). These authors suggest one of the most effective ways to do this is by using "cue questions" (p. 30). They suggest using preconference training so parents can learn the process of responding to cues from school officials. Training parents to ask questions about unfamiliar statements and to have data clarified can also be accomplished through parent training. Training sessions can also be used to help parents understand the terminology related to special education. Keeping the information as simple as possible will have a positive impact on the parents. Providing parents with a script of an IEP conference and training them to adapt it to their personal style is another effective tool for improving IEP communication. Nye, Westling, and Laten concluded by suggesting that if any of their ideas are used, participants should first receive training so the techniques can be used effectively and meaningfully. The amount of training is the key with Nye's, Westlings', and Latens' suggestions.

Each year during the annual IEP conference, school officials, parents, and teachers convene to give input into the student's new and/or updated IEP. Each participant offers their descriptive input as to what is best for the student except the student. The legislation clearly states that the child, whenever appropriate, should be involved in the development of his or her IEP. Like most school districts, the writer's school district is no exception in that the students have not been invited nor have they attended their IEP conference. During the 18 years the writer has been chairing IEP conferences, there has been less than a handful of students in attendance at their IEP conference. Peters' (1990) reported the majority of parents and students are unaware that the child should be invited and encouraged to attend their IEP conference, whenever appropriate. The author's research shows that both parent's and student's agree that their participation in the IEP process is beneficial. This author suggests parents consider talking with school officials, as well as their child, before making the final decision whether the student would benefit from participating on their multidisciplinary team (MDT). Peters says "when students are empowered as active participants of the MDT they increase their independence, self-advocacy skills, and self-interests" (p. 32). Peters found that when students are MDT participants they are less likely to resist the educational components in their IEPs. He also found a student's age, maturity, and cognitive ability will dictate the level of active involvement by the student. The writer suggest student involvement in the IEP process could be as simple as inviting the student to the conference to state his or her likes and/or dislikes about their academics or as meaningful as having the student initiate some goals and objectives. The level of student participation should be decided between the school officials, parents, and the student. Peters' ideas are central to possible strategies to use as solutions for this practicum.

Van Reusen and Bos (1994) reported in their research findings that specific learning disability (SLD) students do benefit from participating in their IEP conference. They reported that an SLD student's cognitive ability is significantly higher than that of their handicapped peers. They reported that when SLD students are involved in the IEP process it empowers them and improves their decision-making skills. Students who had been taught strategies to participate in the IEP process before their exposure to the process had noticeable input and improved academically. Students with training prior to the IEP conference initiated more goals and objectives, were able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and improve academically. The authors' conclusion suggests that children with disabilities take a more active role in the decision-making process and the development of their IEP.

Taylor and Adelman (1986) reported that children as young as age 14 have the cognitive ability to make adult-like decisions. Their research shows student involvement in the IEP reduces a student's negativism towards the classroom, improves their understanding of the IEP process, improves their follow-through with academics, and improves their relationship with adults. The key factor for successful involvement by the student is to match the child's motivation and maturity level. If the child's motivation is low the child should be worked with to increase the motivational level. If the child's skills for participating are low, then the child's skills should be improved. The writer is considering this research for increasing the resource room student's active involvement in the IEP development.

Research by Schunk (1985) revealed that when a student initiates some of their own goals and objectives their academics show improvement. This author went on to say students who set their own goals push for higher academic attainment. Student goal-setting also improved their test performance. He also reported that goal-setting was more beneficial for disabled learners than nondisabled learners. However, Schunk was quick to point out that adults need to monitor student goal-setting and even establish goal limits. The reason this is important is because if students set their goals too high it can result in defeat. Also, if students set their goals low it will not provide new information about the student's true abilities. The author suggests that students be trained in setting their goals. Schunk concludes by saying one of the most significant gains from having a student initiate their goals is that student goal-setting improves task completion. Student goal-setting is a central issue for this practicum.

Involving minors in the decision-making is a concern of many administrators, teachers, and parents. Taylor, Howard, Adelman, and Kaser-Boyd (1984) reported that several factors need to be considered before allowing minors to make decisions about events that can produce negative consequences. The authors' reports that minors, without training, often make their decisions on immediate concerns rather than long-term benefits. They also reported in their findings that youngsters as young as 14 years of age can successfully make decisions that affect them. The authors' research also found adolescents and adults were similar in thinking as to the age appropriate level youngsters should be allowed to make decisions. Research reveals that it is not the lack of ability to make decisions but the motivation to do so. In the authors' study of decision-making, they reported that adolescents received the most favorable rating because that group generally believed they had the knowledge and experience to make decisions that affect them.

Today, more-and-more, adults and the courts are recognizing minors as having the ability to make decisions that affect them personally. In a recent article in the U. S. Today (Fields; 1994) described how a 15-year-old boy, in Florida, won the right to stop taking medication that kept him alive. In South Dakota, a judge recently ruled in favor of a minor saying the girl had the right to prove she was competent to make a decision about having an abortion (Leavitt, 1994).

The importance of choice-making skills for students with severe disabilities was one focus of Shevin's and Kline's (1984) research. Their findings revealed the necessity for handicapped children to learn choice-making skills so they can successfully cross the bridge into adulthood. Shevin and Kline suggest two possible areas of classroom activities. First, children should be able to develop the type of activities they wish to explore and then be allowed to implement them. Second, children should be given the opportunity to make choices within the classroom. They suggest that handicapped children, generally, are not exposed to choice-making experiences in their childhood. Parents and teachers can provide children with choice-making opportunities and an environment that requires choices. Shevin and Kline support the theory that disabled children need to express their preferences and parents and teachers should support their decisions. They concluded their report by making an important point that many parents and educators overlook. That is, parents and teachers generally inflate a protective umbrella that hovers over disabled children so they never experience mistakes or negative experiences. By doing this, Shevin and Kline say parents and teachers do not allow children to make choices and learn from their mistakes. There is nothing better nor more convincing than learning from one's own mistakes; this includes the handicapped learner as well. The writer agrees strongly with this theory. Children with disabilities need the opportunity to learn from their mistakes so their problem-solving and decision-making skills improve.

Description of Selected Solutions

The review of literature offered numerous ideas, suggestions, and strategies for improving the IEP process. The goal of this practicum was to increase the active involvement by the junior high regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and the IEP development. The writer focused on the following three groups in this practicum: (1) the junior high regular classroom teachers, (2) the parents of resource room students, and (3) the junior high resource room students.

The writer selected the following solutions to increase the active involvement by junior high regular classroom teachers in the decision-making process and IEP development. First, the writer designed and implemented an additional page to the IEP document. This page, entitled the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Modifications (Appendix C), is designed to give the regular classroom teacher a more active role in the IEP process. Regular classroom teachers now have the opportunity to initiate goal(s) and objectives for the mainstreamed student. The goal(s) and objectives are to be commensurate with the student's cognitive ability and are integrated with the regular classroom materials and curriculum. Second, the writer provided inservice training for the junior high teachers on the following special education topics: (a) the learning disabled student, (b) special education legislation, and (c) instructional techniques for the disabled learner. Third, the writer received a commitment from the administration and special education director to make every effort to schedule junior high IEP conferences at a time synonymous with all participants' schedules. Fourth, the writer designed and implemented an IEP Signature Page (Appendix B). The IEP Signature Page was designed to provide an area for each MDT participant's signature on the IEP document. Now, for the first time, each junior high teacher with a mainstreamed student will sign the student's IEP document indicating one of three responses: (1) "P" indicating the teacher was "present" at the IEP conference, (2) "C" indicating the teacher was "consulted" before the IEP conference, or (3) "R" indicating the teacher was neither present nor consulted before the IEP conference but has "read" the IEP and understands its contents. Fifth, because this was the inaugural year for the regular classroom teachers to use their new IEP form, the writer provided two inservice training sessions for the teachers on initiating goals, objectives and making regular classroom modifications. In addition, the writer met individually with each teacher to assist them with initiating individual student goal(s) and objectives and to help them in designing appropriate regular classroom modifications to meet the unique learning needs of the individual mainstreamed student.

The writer selected the following solutions to increase the active involvement by the parents in the decision-making process and IEP development. First, the writer developed several techniques to improve communication. These techniques included: (a) sending a welcome letter to parents of returning and new students, (b) sending the parents a monthly behavior and achievement report for the mainstreamed classes and the resource room classes (Appendix G), (c) sending a Resource Room Achievement Memo (Appendix H) to the parents when their child has had a significant accomplishment in class, (d) sending a Social-Gram (Appendix J) to the parents when their child displays positive peer and/or social behavior, (e) sending the parents copies of magazine articles, news clippings, and special education legislation that is relevant to their child's placement, and (f) providing parents with a list of support and informational organizations for individuals with disabilities. Second, the writer designed an additional page for the IEP document entitled Parent(s) Goals and Home Interventions (Appendix E). This page enables the parents to initiate annual goals for their child while he or she is away from the school environment. The form also provides an area for the parents to list what home intervention they will institute to assist the child with achieving the goal(s). Third, the writer received total support from the administration and special education director to schedule all IEP conferences during a time that was synonymous with both parents' schedules. The fourth and fifth solutions are probably the most significant areas of emphasis of this practicum. The fourth solution comprised the development of a Parental Advocacy Manual for Special Education. The information in this manual is an accumulation of information the writer felt would be helpful to a parent of a child with disabilities. From the parents' perspective, this manual is everything parents of special education students want to know but no one will tell them. The writer handed out the manuals during the parents' inservice training workshop. Parents not in attendance had their copy sent home to them with their child. The fifth solution for increasing the active involvement by the parents in the decision-making process and IEP development dealt with the writer sponsoring the first inservice training workshop for the parents of junior high special education students. The parents' inservice training workshop accomplished three objectives: (1) improved the parent's understanding of special education legislation, (2) improved the parent's knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities so they can actively and knowledgeably participate in their child's special education program, and (3) taught the parents strategies in order to become actively involved in the decision-making process and IEP development.

The sixth solution provided parents with a list of special education terminology so they could have a clearer understanding of the terminology school officials use during an IEP conference. Special education terminology was also covered during the parents' inservice training. Improving the parents understanding of conference terminology was an effective means of increasing successful communication between the school and parents.

The seventh solution focused on designing and implementing a procedure whereby parents (and students) received a Special Invitation (Appendix K) to the

IEP conference. This invitation was mailed home to the parents and it cordially invited the parent(s) to the IEP conference. The invitation stated the importance of the parent's presents at the IEP conference along with the location, date, time, and a list of the expected participants and their position.

The eighth solution provided the parents with a "rough draft" of the IEP document that stated the child's current achievement level, recommendations for annual goals and short term instructional objectives, and a description of the related services to be provided. It was clearly noted on the "rough draft" of the IEP that these were only suggestions and recommendations and the final decision would be made during the scheduled IEP conference.

The writer's ninth solution dealt with designing and enclosing a Parent Concerns and Input Worksheet (Appendix L) with the "rough draft" copy of the proposed IEP document. The Parent Concerns and Input Worksheet was used by the parents to record their concerns and ideas for quality input during the IEP conference. Parents filled out their Parent Concerns and Input Worksheet in the comfort of their home without the stress associated with attending the IEP conference. The completed Parent Concerns and Input Worksheet Form provided school officials with greater insight into parental feelings, wants, and needs.

The writer designed and implemented a Parent(s) Goals, and Home Intervention Form (Appendix E) for the tenth solution. This form was included with the sample "rough draft" of the proposed IEP document. The parents used this sheet to list the goals and objectives they will attempt to achieve with their child during the evenings, weekends, vacations, and summer break. This form provides the parents with a home plan detailing how they could help their child improve his or her academics when the child is away from school. The parent's goals and home interventions provide the parents with a sense of ownership in the IEP and a means of identifying the child's accomplishments at home.

The eleventh solution involved making every effort possible to schedule IEP conference so that the optimal number of participants were available to attend. This solution was accomplish due to a total commitment from the school administration and special education office to synchronize the time for conferences to enable both parents, whenever possible, and school officials to be in attendance. The most effective IEP document for the disabled student is created when all the necessary MDT participants provide input into its development.

The writer selected the following interventions to increase the active involvement by junior high special education students in their decision-making process and IEP development. For the first intervention, the writer designed and implemented a screening instrument entitled Student Screening Instrument for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Participation (Appendix M). The screening instrument is used by school officials, teachers, parents, and the student to determine whether the student will benefit from participating in the decision-making process and the development of his or her IEP. The screening instrument follows the suggested guidelines offered in Federal legislation. Those guidelines ask if the child's participation in the IEP process would be: (a) helpful in the development of the IEP and/or (b) directly beneficial to the child. The school officials, teachers, parents, and the student mutually agree as to the appropriateness of the child's participation and to the following three levels of participation: (1) no participation, (2) partial participation, and (3) full participation. The reverse side of the screening instrument (Appendix N) is used by the MDT participants to justify anything other than full participation.

The second intervention focused on designing a special student invitation and a procedure whereby each junior high student received an invitation to be an active participant on their MDT. The Special Invitation (Appendix K) states the importance of the child's presence at the IEP conference along with the location, date, time, and a list of expected participants and their position.

The third intervention focused on a newly designed and initiated Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form (Appendix F). This form was included with the sample "rough draft" of the proposed IEP that was sent to the parents. The student and parents used this form to list the goals that the student would work towards achieving during the evenings, weekends, vacations, and summer break. The home interventions that would be implemented to assist the student in accomplishing their goals were also listed on this form. The form provides each student with a home plan detailing their academic focus away from school. This list of personal goal(s) provides them with a sense of ownership in the IEP and a means of identifying their accomplishments.

Report of Action Taken

Throughout the practicum the goal was to improve the IEP process by developing strategies that would increase the active involvement of junior high regular classroom teachers, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development. The following implementation plan was initiated to accomplish this goal.

The writer disseminated a welcome letter to the parents of the perspective special education students at the beginning of the school year that this practicum was implemented. The letter contained the following information: (a) cordial invitation welcoming the student back to school, (b) a quick overview of special education and its supporting legislation, (c) a brief summary of the writer's experience, and (d) a brief overview of the writer's practicum and the positive influence it will have on the parents and the school's junior high special education program. Enclosed with this letter was a parent questionnaire (Appendix A) designed to get baseline information regarding the parent's knowledge of special education, and their understanding of their child's special education program.

The writer then reviewed the proposed practicum with the school administration, special education department, and junior high teachers. The writer first met with the school principal and special education director. Each of them were already familiar with the practicum because the writer had relied on them for necessary input as required by contract. The writer was advised to contact the district's superintendent for his approval and permission was granted to present the practicum to the junior high faculty during the next regularly scheduled teachers' meeting. The writer received unanimous support for the practicum upon presenting it to the junior high faculty.

Next, the writer proposed a policy change to the administration that would include evaluating the certified faculty as to their involvement in their mainstreamed students' special education process. This idea received immediate negative reaction. As a result, the administration worked closely with the writer on another option to accomplish the same objective. The idea of a regular classroom teacher's evaluation instrument was substituted for the following three procedures: (1) synchronizing IEP conferences with the junior high teacher's schedule and (2) adding a page in the IEP document for the regular classroom teacher to initiate goals for the mainstreamed student and the modifications that would be made within each regular classroom to meet the student's unique learning needs, and (3) adding a new signature page to the IEP document allowing all participants to sign. A time schedule that would allow both parents and school personnel to attend the junior high IEP conferences was accomplished through a commitment from the school administration and special education director to work cooperatively when scheduling IEP conferences.

The writer started the second month of this practicum by sending the parents a monthly behavior and academic summary of their child's progress. This monthly summary had two modifications from the original plan. First, the name of the form was changed to Parent/Student Monthly Communication Form; side one (Appendix G) and side two (Appendix H). Second, after a lengthy discussion with the Director of Special Education, the writer agreed to the district's request to not change the current tri-weekly feedback form. Instead, the writer was able to use the new Parent/Student Monthly Communication Form for students that were identified by the district's tri-weekly feedback form as functioning in the failing range for academics and the gray area for behavior. As it turned out, the objective was still achieved and the communication between the school, writer, and parents improved.

The idea of calling parents when their child had an exceptional day at school started out on schedule but was discontinued and supplemented with two additional communications. The reason the parent calls were discontinued was because the majority of the parents both worked and many of the father's worked the graveyard shift at a nearby copper mine. As a result, calls were being made to parents at work or the calls to the home were disturbing a sleeping parent during the day. To substitute for this needed communication, the writer placed more emphasis on two other positive communication forms parents received: (1) the Resource Room Achievement Memo (Appendix I) that was sent to parents when their child completed a workbook or learned a new concept, and (b) the Social-Gram (Appendix J) that was sent to parents each time their child displayed prosocial behavior.

The next procedure the writer initiated during the second month focused on sending parents magazine articles, newspaper articles and news releases regarding special education legislation and/or updates. The writer received a great deal of feedback from parents on this procedure. Many parents even contacted the writer and requested information on particular areas. The single most popular requested area related to articles and information covering Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

The initial idea for obtaining information from parents using a parent inventory and concerns survey was changed to one of parent input. The Parent Inventory & Concerns Survey's name was changed to the Parent's Concerns and Input Worksheet (Appendix L). The survey was modified from the original intent when the writer made it possible for the parents to have a "rough draft" copy of the IEP to review, add comments to, and make notes of any concerns before the IEP conference. The parents used the Parent's Concerns and Input Worksheet to write down their comments, concerns and added input while in the comfort of their home without the stress of sitting at the IEP conference. Parents were able to attend the conference prepared to give input and actively participate in the decision-making process and IEP development.

The writer began month three by sending parents a Resource Room Achievement Memo (Appendix I). The parents received a memo whenever their child made a significant academic accomplishment in the resource room or in the mainstreamed environment. The writer described the academic accomplishment on a Student Resource Memo and mailed it home to their parents. This Resource Room Achievement Memo was a hit with the parents and students.

Another positive intervention with the parents and students was the implementation of a Social-Gram (Appendix J). A Social-Gram was sent to parents when their child displayed positive peer and prosocial behavior in the resource room or in the mainstreamed environment. Each time a student displayed positive peer and/or prosocial behavior the writer described the incident on the Social-Gram and mailed it home to the parents. This positive peer and/or prosocial behavior could take place anywhere on campus. However, the majority of the Social-Grams were sent because of observed behavior while in the resource room.

A procedure and form were instituted at the beginning of month four that provided the regular classroom teacher with the opportunity to initiate student goal(s) and objectives for their mainstreamed students. The form is titled the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modifications Form (Appendix C) and is used by the regular classroom teacher to initiate the goal(s) and objectives they feel the mainstreamed student can achieve during the school year while in the regular classroom environment. The form also provides a section for the regular classroom teacher to list the modifications that they will make within their classrooms. The regular classroom modifications focus on providing the student with an environment conducive to his/her unique learning needs and style. This Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modifications Form and added procedure caught the junior high staff by surprise. To assist the junior high staff with the initial introduction, the writer provided them with two inservice training sessions and individual assistance as requested.

During the second half of month four the writer initiated sending a Special Invitation (Appendix K) to junior high students inviting them to participate on their MDT. This idea was received favorably by the students. The invitation had an added incentive whereby students brought their invitation to the IEP conference and exchanged it for a coupon worth two free snack bar items. Many students asked the writer to continue this process next year and the writer agreed wholeheartedly to their request. Several of the students said they felt honored to receive their personal Special Invitation and to be part of their MDT.

At the beginning of month five the writer initiated the MDT training sessions for junior high resource students to familiarize them with the special education process. Since this was the first time junior high resource students were invited to participate in their IEP process, the writer felt it would be necessary to acquaint the students with what takes place during the preparation for the IEP conference and the development of the IEP. Thus, the writer met with each student and outlined the special education process. The writer did this in conjunction with the end-of-year evaluations and updating of the students' achievement testing. Much of the information presented to the students paralleled the information their parents received during the parent inservice training workshop. Areas that were highlighted included: (1) what the writer does with the student's results from his or her spring testing, (2) how the test results are used to design the student's resource program, (3) what is the IEP document and how is it used in the student's education program, (4) how goals and objectives are decided during the students IEP conference, and (5) how the IEP affects the way the student grows socially and educationally.

The writer completed month five by implementing a parent/teacher communication procedure that ensured open communication between the parents and school personnel. This communication procedure consisted of all the improved parent contacts involved in this practicum. These improved parent contacts are as follows:

- sending an annual welcome back to school letter;
- initiating flexibility in scheduling school conferences;
- completing a monthly behavior and academic summary;
- sending parents important news articles, newspaper clippings and updated information relating to their child's educational deficits;
- allowing parents to preview the IEP documents before the conference;
- providing the parent's with an Input Worksheet Form to be filled out at home and brought to the IEP conference;
- forwarding parents positive news from school regarding their child's successes and progress; these include, but are not limited to, the Resource Room Achievement Memo and the Social-Gram;
- inviting and encouraging the exceptional child to be an active participant on the MDT;
- providing the parents with annual inservice training regarding special education;
- providing the parents with the opportunity to initiate goals and objectives to improve their child's social, academic, and personal skills; and
- providing the parents with handouts defining the terminology used in special education and information on supportive organizations for parents and persons with disabilities.

The sixth month started with what turned out to be one of the most important solutions to improving the active involvement of the parents in the decision-making process and IEP development. The writer implemented an inservice training workshop for the parents of junior high special education students to inform them of their legal rights and responsibilities as outlined in current legislation. The parents' training workshop was so successful that when the community became aware of the workshop the writer started receiving calls from parents with children in special education from all grades in the district. The writer also received calls from people wanting to attend the parents' training workshop from surrounding communities. Unfortunately, the district only allowed the writer to hold the inservice training workshop for parents of the junior high special education students. However, because of the parental inquiry for the writer's workshop, the school district sponsored two additional workshops following the writer's practicum and is considering making the workshops an annual event district-wide.

Concluding the sixth month of this practicum, the writer designed and implemented a screening instrument that determines a student's level of involvement on their MDT. This instrument, entitled Student Screening Instrument for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Participation, was received positively by the administration, special education director, teachers, and parents. The screening instrument is designed to be filled out on each student by the student's regular classroom teacher and the other members of the MDT. Because of some unforeseen circumstances, every MDT participant did not have the opportunity to apply the instrument to each student. However, the instrument was filled out on each student by the writer and the student's regular classroom teacher or homeroom teacher. The instrument has three levels of student participation: (1) "Full participation," (2) "Partial Participation," (3) "No participation." For this practicum, all junior high students received a full participation rating and did participate in their IEP conference. In the future, if a student receives a ranking other than "full participation" the person filling out the instrument needs to justify the less than "full participation" on the reverse side of the instrument (Appendix N). The decision to have the student participate in the IEP process ultimately rests in the hands of the parents and the majority of other MDT participants' decision.

During the first week of the seventh month, the writer implemented A Parent(s) Goals and Home Intervention Form (Appendix E). This form was filled out by the parents and included in their child's IEP document. The form states what the parents want their child to achieve while he or she was away from the school environment. The Parent's Goals and Home Intervention Form i s one of six preconference preparation items mailed to parents a week before the IEP conference. The Parent's Goals and Home Intervention Form is filled out by the parents and brought to the IEP conference. During the conference, school officials helped refine the parents' goals and assisted in developing workable home interventions. Once the parent's goals(s) and home interventions were finalized and agreed upon, the Parent's Goals and Home Intervention Form is included in the student's IEP document.

During the middle of the seventh month, the writer initiated a procedure whereby parents are sent a packet of six preconference preparation items one week before their child's scheduled IEP conference. The items in the preconference packet enable parents to provide quality and constructive input into the decision-making process and IEP development. The seven preconference preparation items included: (1) a Special Invitation (Appendix K) to attend the IEP conference, (2) a "rough draft" copy of the district's IEP recommendations, (3) a Parent's Concerns and Input Worksheet (Appendix L), (4) a Student Screening Instrument for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Participation (Appendix M), (5) a Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form (Appendix F), and (6) a Parent(s) Goals and Home Intervention Form (Appendix E).

Concluding the seventh month, the writer implemented a scope and sequence instructional packet that helped resource students understand the necessary steps in learning a concept/subject. This packet was put together by the writer for each resource student and was included in their daily resource work portfolio. For each deficit area the student was in the resource room receiving instruction, the writer included the scope and sequence objectives for that particular area in the student's work portfolio. The subject's scope and sequence corresponded with the student's actual work assignments. The students were able to begin seeing the relationship between moving from one concept to another in their daily schoolwork assignments. The students were also able to select individual items in the scope and sequence chart to pursue and/or work on during their educational choice time. Most students chose items that related to computer enrichment activities.

The final month of this practicum the writer completed the last five solutions to improve the IEP process for junior high special education students. The first solution dealt with implementing a procedure whereby regular classroom teacher's initiate, and include in the mainstreamed student's annual IEP, the goals and objectives that they want the mainstreamed student to achieve during the school. The form teachers used to initiate their goals, objectives, and classroom modifications is entitled the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modifications Form (Appendix C). The regular classroom modifications section of the form solicits the teacher's response to the type of modifications they will make to the following areas: (a) environmental, (b) instructional, (c) materials, (d) tests, (e) grading, and (f) other. This one page form can serve as a constant and accurate reminder to the regular classroom teacher as to the special needs and requirements of the mainstreamed student. The Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom

Modifications Form provides the regular classroom teacher with four unique purposes: (1) ownership in the mainstreamed student's IEP and education; (2) answers to numerous questions and concerns regarding a mainstreamed student's academics; (3) a quick and accurate understanding of a mainstreamed student's environmental needs within the regular classroom; and (4) a tailored instructional plan the mainstream student requires to be successful, experience positive self-esteem, and demonstrate academic growth.

The writer followed-up on the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modifications Form by initiating a procedure and form that provided the regular classroom teacher the opportunity to fill out a semester progress report on their mainstreamed students. The progress report titled Regular Classroom Teacher's Semester Progress Report for Mainstreamed Students (Appendix D) was designed to have the regular classroom teacher give a quick and accurate accounting of the goals and objectives completed to date. The form is tailored to the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Classroom Modifications Form. A copy of the Regular Classroom Teacher's Semester Progress Report is retained for the regular classroom teacher's file, a copy sent home to the parents and student, and a copy is placed in the student's special education file.

A parental handout was initiated during the eighth month of this practicum to provide parents with a list of definitions and terminology used in special education. The definitions and terminology of special education were also included in the parent's advocacy manual that parent's received at their inservice training workshop. However, the writer believes that this list was important enough that another copy was forwarded to each parent during the eighth month of this practicum to serve as another reference to keep communication and understanding at its optimum best.

In conjunction with the list of definitions and terminology used in special education, the writer sent parents a list of support and information organizations for persons with disabilities. A list of support and information organizations for parents and persons with disabilities was also included in the parent's advocacy manual parents received at their inservice training workshop. Again, the writer believes that this list was important enough that a copy of the list was forward to each parent during the eighth month of this practicum. Providing parents with this type of information will reinforce their appreciation for the school's effort to promote the success of their child through the school years and into adulthood.

For the final solution of this practicum, the writer implemented a Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form (Appendix F). This form is also included in the student's annual IEP document and states the student's goals and objectives that he or she will work towards achieving while they are away from the school environment. In order to provide the student with the necessary skills to complete their form the writer provided the students with some strategies on how to select goals and objectives. This was accomplished by working with each student and helping them understand their disability and showing them ways to compensate for areas of weakness. The writer focused on the type of behavior the student would need to achieve the goals and objectives. The students also used their academic scope and sequence in their portfolios to choose particular items to pursue. The IEP involvement strategies were covered and the students filled out a rough draft of their Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form. This form was included in the parent's preconference package and returned with the parents and student to the IEP conference for finalizing.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem at the writer's work setting was the lack of participation by the required individuals in the decision-making process and individualized educational plan (IEP) development for junior high special education students. The problem involved the following three groups of individuals at the junior high level: (1) the junior high regular classroom teachers, (2) the parents of junior high special education students, and (3) the junior high special education students themselves. The writer focused on these three groups to improve the IEP process for junior high students.

The writer developed and implemented five interventions to increase the active involvement of the junior high regular classroom teachers in the decision-making process and IEP development. The first intervention focused on increasing the regular classroom teacher's ownership in their mainstreamed students, IEP document. The writer successfully met this goal by designing and implementing an additional page to the IEP document. This page is entitled the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Modifications Form (Appendix C). The regular classroom teachers now have the opportunity to initiate goal(s), objectives, and to list the regular classroom modifications that will be made within the room to provide the mainstreamed student with an optimal learning environment. The goal(s) and objectives that the regular classroom teacher initiates are commensurate with the student's cognitive ability, special needs, and are integrated directly into the regular classroom materials and curriculum. This was an important intervention because now regular classroom teachers have a better understanding of individual student needs. By providing the regular classroom teachers with this sense of ownership they have become more concerned about the classroom modifications that are required in order for mainstreamed students to be successful in the regular classroom environment.

The second intervention focused on providing the regular classroom teachers with inservice training regarding the new Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Modifications Form. For this practicum each regular classroom teacher focused on two primary areas the student needed to be successful in for a particular class. For an example, the science teacher initiated the goals that each mainstreamed student will be able to successfully manipulate and use half of the science lab equipment and each mainstreamed student will be able to stay on task for thirty-minutes. For the regular classroom modifications, the inservice training focused on these six areas: (1) classroom environment, (2) instructional method(s), (3) classroom materials, (4) classroom tests and/or assessments, (5) classroom grading procedures, and (6) "other" [being any modification that does not fall under the previously mentioned categories]. The teacher inservice training, teacher initiated goal(s) and objectives, and the listing of regular classroom modifications were all successfully implemented. Before this practicum, junior high regular classroom teachers did not initiate goal(s) and objectives nor did they list any regular classroom modifications for their mainstreamed students. As a result, these were areas of constant frustration for the regular classroom teacher. Now, the regular classroom teacher is able to use their Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Modifications Form for a quick and accurate guide to what each mainstreamed student requires while in the regular classroom environment. Table V shows the number of goal(s) and objectives that teachers initiated for their mainstreamed students during this practicum's end-of-year (EOY) IEP conferences. The numbers in parentheses represent the total items for that grade level and the number on the right side of the parentheses represents the number of different goals and objectives.

Table V

Goals and Objectives Initiated by the Regular Classroom Teachers for their Mainstreamed Students

Grade	Number of Teachers	Annual Goals	Short-Term Objectives
6	3	(6)2	(9)3
7	*8	(16)2	(24)3
8	*8	(16)2	(24)3
Total	11	(38)6	(57)9

Note. *The seventh and eighth grade teachers are the same for each grade level.

Table VI displays the grade level, number of teachers, and modifications made within the regular classroom to meet the needs of the mainstreamed students. Again, the numbers on the left hand side of the parentheses represents the total items for that grade level and the number on the right side of the parentheses represents the number of different items reviewed. The similarity among items is a result of many mainstreamed student's requiring the same modifications to be successful in a regular classroom environment. The writer believes modifications will become more individualized once this procedure becomes routine with the teachers and as their involvement in the IEP process continues to increase.

Table VI

Grade level, Number of Teachers, and Modifications Made Within the Regular Classroom

Grade	Teachers	Environment	Instructional	Material	Tests	Grading	Other
6	3	5/3	9/3	7/3	9/3	3/3	0
7	*8	7/3	24/3	9/4	5/3	6/3	0
8	*8	6/3	24/3	8/4	6/3	5/3	0
Total	11	18/3	57/9	24/4	20/3	14/3	0

Note. *The seventh and eighth grade teachers are the same for each grade level.

The third procedure that the writer implemented was to have the regular classroom teachers fill out a semester progress report entitled Regular Classroom Teacher's Semester Progress Report for Mainstreamed Students (Appendix D). Following each semester, the regular classroom teachers fill out a semester progress report for each of their mainstreamed students. The design of the Regular Classroom Teacher's Semester Progress Report for Mainstreamed Students follows the format of the Regular Classroom Goal(s), Objectives, and Modifications Form (Appendix C).

Designing the form in this fashion allows the teachers to address all the necessary areas quickly and accurately.

The fourth intervention enabled all junior high teachers to have their signatures on the student's IEP document. The writer designed and implemented an IEP signature page entitled Junior High IEP Signature Page (Appendix B) to complete this goal. This new page when added to the junior high special education document improved the regular classroom teachers' involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development at the junior high level. In the past, not all junior high teachers attended IEP conferences nor did they see and/or sign the IEP document. As a result, many junior high teachers had no idea what each mainstreamed student's deficits were nor did they fully understand the type of instructional program that best meets the student's unique learning needs. Even the newly implemented scheduling considerations did not allow for all junior high teachers to be present at all junior high IEP conferences, but now all the junior high teachers sign each junior high IEP document. Their signature and a corresponding "P," "C", or "R" indicates one of three possible ways the teacher was involved in the IEP development. A "P" represents the teacher was "present" at the IEP conference, a "C" signifies the teacher was "consulted" prior to the IEP conference, or an "R" indicates the teacher was neither present nor consulted prior to the IEP conference but has "read" the IEP and understands its contents. The fifth and final procedure that increased the regular classroom teachers active involvement in their mainstreamed students special education program involved scheduling junior high IEP conferences at a time synonymous with all schedules. This effort is expected to improve attendance in the future, but for this practicum it had little significance. This is because when junior high end-of-year IEP conferences are held they are held during a marathon session starting on a Monday in April and continue nonstop until they are completed. However, any junior high IEP conferences other than the EOY are scheduled to accommodate school personnel, parents, and the student.

The writer increased the active involvement of the parents in the decision-making process and IEP development by implementing 11 interventions. The first intervention was designed to improve communication with the parents regarding their child's current progress in school. The writer accomplished this by implementing the following seven procedures: First, a welcome letter was sent to parents of returning and new students. Many parents expressed appreciation for this letter because it made them feel as if the writer and school were concerned about them and their child. The letter provided the parents and child with a cordial welcome back for another year, an identification of Federal legislation that applies to special education, an overview of the writer's qualifications and experience, and a short summary of how the writer's practicum will improve their understanding of special education and their child's educational program. Second, a Parent/Student Monthly Communication Form (Appendix G) was sent each month to all parents regarding their child's current achievement and behavior rating from mainstream classes and the resource room classes. As stated earlier, the sending of the monthly behavior and academic summary was only sent to those parents whose child was in need of immediate intervention as a result of low academic achievement and/or poor behavior. The school district asked the writer for this to enable the district's current feedback procedure to remain in place. Third, a Resource Room Achievement Memo (Appendix I) was sent to the parents when their child had a significant accomplishment in class. Fourth, a Social-Gram (Appendix J) was sent to the parents when their child displayed positive peer and/or social behavior. Fifth, the parents were mailed copies of magazine articles, news clippings, and special education legislation that was relevant to their child's placement. Sixth, the parents were provided with a list of special education terminology, acronyms, and organizations for individuals with disabilities. This information provided parents with names, addresses, and areas of family/parental support for those with disabled student. The writer also provided parents with a list of advocacy groups within the writer's state. This information started parents thinking about creating a local special education advocacy group. Table VII shows the number of Resource Room Achievement Memos, Social-Grams, and mailings that were made throughout this practicum.

The Seventh intervention that helped to increase the parents active involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development pertained to adding the Parent(s) Goals and Home Interventions Form (Appendix E) to the IEP document. This form provided the parents with the opportunity to initiate annual goals for their child when he or she was away from the school environment. The form also provides an area for the parents to list what home intervention they will initiate to assist their child in achieving the goal. The parents of each junior high student received a Parent(s) Goals and Home Interventions Form one week before the IEP conference.

Table VII

The Number of and Types of Communications Sent to the Parents Throughout the Practicum

	Communications Sent to Parents		
Grade	Resource Room Achievement Memos	Social-Grams	Number of Information Mailings
6	17	23	9
7	24	21	9
8	22	32	*17
Total	63	76	35

Note. The higher number of mailings for the eighth grade group was a result of information on attention deficit disorder (ADD). The eighth grade had one student listed as learning disabled and ADD.

The eighth intervention for the parents involved sending the parents a preconference package that contained a "rough draft" of what the school was proposing for their child's special education program for the upcoming year. The parents were able to sit down in the comfort of their home environment and decide, with their child, what they would like to place an emphasis on during the upcoming school year. The parents brought their input to the IEP conference to be included in the IEP document. During the IEP conference it was quite obvious which parents worked on developing goals, objectives, and those that did nothing at all. Table VIII shows a breakdown of the total number of parent goals, objectives, and home interventions.

Table VIII

Parent Initiated Goals, Objectives, and Home Interventions

Total Number of Parent Goals	Total Number of Different Goals	Total Number of Home Interventions	Total Number of Different Home Interventions
27	11	14	6

The results listed in Table VIII are very encouraging to the writer. These numbers clearly demonstrate that parents are extremely interested in their child's education. All the parents were very receptive to the idea of initiating goals and home interventions for improving a particular area of their son's or daughter's education. Many expressed the need for more of this type of interaction between the school and home. Table IX shows a breakdown of the total number of parent goals and the areas of emphasis. Table X shows a breakdown of the number of home interventions that were initiated and the area of emphasis.

The ninth parent intervention focused on having both parents attend the IEP conference. The writer received total support from the school administration and special education office to synchronize time schedules to enable both parents and school officials to be in attendance, whenever possible. However, even with this accommodation, not all EOY reviews had both parents in attendance. Table XI show the breakdown of conference participants for this year's EOY individualized education

Table IX

Number of Parent Initiated Goal(s) and their Content Area

Number of Goal(s) Initiated	Content Area of the Goal(s)
10	The child will complete homework each evening.
4	Provide a structured homework schedule each evening.
3	The child will improve his/her responsibility at school and home.
2	The child will improve his/her study skills
2	The child will continue with his/her current daily routine.
1	The child will bring his/her homework home each evening
1	The child will read for 20 minutes each evening
1	Give positive encouragement regarding homework completion
1	The child will control his/her aggressive behavior
1	The child will work on academic workbooks over the summer months
1	Use consistent discipline procedures with child.
Total 27	

Table X

Number of Parent Initiated Home Interventions and the Area of Emphasis

Number of Home Interventions Initiated	Areas of Emphasis for Initiated Home Interventions
8	Provide a special homework area.
2	Encourage the child to bring his/her homework home.
1	Move slowly into a new homework routine.
1	Unplug telephone
1	Trade study time for telephone time
1	Give the child daily encouragement regarding school work.
1	Special rewards for completing homework assignments
Total 15	

conferences. The numbers in parentheses represent last year's IEP conference attendance and the number to the right represent this year's attendance.

Table XI

Participants Attending the Junior High Special Education End-of-Year IEP conferences

Grade	Conferences Held	Student Attending	Both Parents Attending	Mother Attending	Father Attending
6	(3) 5	(0) 5	(0) 0	(2) 5	(0) 0
7	(8) 9	(0) 9	(0) 0	(5) 8	(1) 1
8	(8) 10	(1) 10	(3) 4	(5) 6	(0) 0
Total	(19) 24	(1) 24	(3) 4	(12) 19	(1) 1

Note. Eight of the total number of families listed are single parent families

The tenth and eleventh interventions addressed the most significant areas of this practicum. The tenth intervention dealt with compiling a Parental Advocacy Manual for Special Education. The information in the manual is an accumulation of information the writer felt would be helpful to a parent of a child with disabilities. Parents are finding the manual is "everything a parent always wanted to know about special education but no one would tell them." The manual was handed out during the parents' inservice training workshop. Parents not in attendance had their copy sent home to them with their child. A comprehensive accounting of all the information in the manual would be too lengthy to list. However, to give the reader an idea of the different subjects covered in the manual the writer lists the following topics:

- Information on Federal and state legislation and how it relates to special education
- Information on parent networking

- Information on organizations that support handicapped children and parents of handicapped children
- Information on how parents can participate in the IEP and the decision-making process
- A glossary of special education terms and acronyms
- An overview of the IEP and the special education process
- A clear understanding of the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Information on related services for special education
- Disabilities covered under special education
- An explanation of special education eligibility requirements
- A list of resources available to parents
- A procedure for what parents do when they have questions and concerns
- An outline for creating a home file for special education.

The eleventh intervention concerning the parents dealt with providing the parents of junior high special education students an inservice training workshop. The workshop dealt with a parent's legal rights and responsibilities and how it relates to their child's special education program. The writer's inservice training workshop was the first time parents were offered any sort of special education training. The workshop attendance was limited to the parents of junior high special education students according to the writer's proposal and district request. However, when the word traveled, the writer was approached by many other parents within the district as well as surrounding communities because of the parents' need to know their rights and responsibilities in the special education process. This interest by parents clearly demonstrates the need for parent training in the areas of special education. As a result, the writer's school district held two additional parents' rights and responsibilities workshops following the writer's practicum.

For the writer's inservice training workshop, a personal invitation was sent to the parents of the junior high special education students with a follow-up phone call the night before the workshop. Table XII shows a breakdown of the participants in attendance at the writer's Workshop. As shown in Table X, 50 % of the parent(s) were in attendance at the workshop. Also, in comparison to IEP conferences the workshop was predominantly female. In fact, of the 14 participants, 71 % of them were mothers. The writer's primary focus of the inservice training for parents had three objectives: (1) improve the parents' understanding of special education

Table XII

Participants Attending the Parents' Rights and Responsibilities Workshop for Special Education

Grade	Both Parents Attending	Mother Attending	Father Attending	Other
6	0	1	0	0
7	0	2	1	*1
8	3	3	0	0
Total 21	3	6	1	*1

Note. *The other participant was a single mother of an out-of-district special education child looking for information.

legislation, (2) improve the parents' knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities so they can actively and knowledgeably participate in their child's special education program, and (3) teach the parents strategies for becoming actively involved in the decision-making process and IEP development. The information presented at the workshop combined with the information in the Parental Advocacy Manual for Special Education gave parents a much better understanding of the special education process. All of this information can now be used by the parents towards increasing their active involvement in their child's IEP development.

The twelfth intervention focused on designing and implementing a special IEP Invitation (Appendix K) that cordially invites the parent(s) and their child to the IEP conference. The invitation states the importance of having the parents and child at the IEP conference along with the location, date, time, and a list of the expected participants and their positions. The child (student) was given an added incentive to attend the IEP conference. When the child brought their invitation to the IEP conference they traded it for two coupons to the student council snack bar.

Another area that promoted open communication between the school and parents dealt with providing the parents with a list of special education terminology and acronyms. Special education personnel often get so involved in the terminology and jargon they forget that the jargon is foreign to many of the parents. The writer put together a list of terms and acronyms and included it in the Parental Advocacy Manual for Special Education for distribution to the parents. Parents now have a clearer understanding of the terminology school officials use during an IEP conference. Improving the parents understanding of conference terminology was an effective way to keep communication open between the school and parents during IEP meetings.

The thirteenth, and final, intervention used to increase the parents' active involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development involved sending each parent a preconference package that contained the following items: (1) the parent's official IEP invitation (Appendix K), (2) a Student Screening Instrument (Appendix M), (3) a Parent's Input and Concerns Worksheet (Appendix L), a "rough draft" of the IEP, (4) a copy of the Parent(s) Goals and Home Intervention Form (Appendix C), and (5) a copy of the Student's Goals for School and Home (Appendix F). By implementing all of the above interventions and procedures with the parents the writer was able to improve the parents' active participation in the decision-making process and IEP development at the junior high level.

Near the end of the practicum, the writer sent a postquestionnaire (Appendix A) to the parents to determine the increased improvement in their knowledge regarding the Federal legislation surrounding special education (IDEA) and their role in the decision-making process and the development of their child's IEP. For the parents who attended the parents' inservice training workshop there was a 100% improvement in their knowledge of Federal legislation surrounding special education (IDEA) and their role in the decision-making process and IEP development. For the parents who did not attend the parents' inservice training workshop there was an 85% improvement in the their knowledge of special education legislation and their role in the decision-making process and IEP development. This equals an overall 93% improvement in the parent's knowledge regarding the Federal legislation surrounding special education (IDEA) and the parent's role in the decision-making process and the development of their child's IEP.

To increase the student's active involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development the writer completed the following five goals: (1) provided each student with training on what to expect from the IEP conference and how to provide input during the IEP conference, (2) provided each student with a scope and sequence list for each of their deficit subject area(s), (3) implemented a Student Screening Instrument for MDT Participation (Appendix M), (4) implemented a procedure whereby students were given an IEP Invitation (Appendix K) inviting them to participate on their multidisciplinary team (MDT), and (5) implemented a Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form (Appendix F) procedure whereby each student initiates some personal goals for school and home for the upcoming school year.

The student's MDT training sessions outlined what a student can expect during the IEP conference. The writer met with the students during their class sessions and held mock IEP conference. During the mock conference students played the different roles of MDT participants. Each student was able to be other members of the MDT team as well as the student. When the student was playing the student's role, a mock IEP was reviewed and the student was able to interact while in a nonthreatening environment. Each student would use their scope and sequence list for their deficit area(s) to suggest possible goals to pursue during the upcoming school year. Students also proposed some of their goals that were directed towards self-improvement, either in school or at home. The students listed their goals for school and/or home on their Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form. The Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form was included with the parents' preconference package so the parents could review the student's goals. All sessions with the student were relaxing, informative, and productive. Table XIII shows the number of student conferences held, students in attendance, number of goals initiated, and interventions proposed.

Table XIII

Student Participation During IEP Conference and the Number of Initiated Goal(s) With School and Home Interventions

Grade	Conferences Held	Students Attending	Initiated Goals	Initiated School & Home Interventions
6	5	5	8	11
7	9	9	12	18
8	10	9	13	13
Total	24	23	33	42

The Student Screening Instrument (Appendix M) was accepted openly by the administration, staff, and parents. Even though all the junior high students were deemed eligible to participate on their MDT, all involved felt it was an instrument needed for future student screening. During this practicum's EOY conferences, the screening instrument was used by school officials, parents, and student to determine whether the student would benefit from participating in the decision-making process and IEP development. The screening instrument helped determine each student's degree of participation on their MDT by ruling out the possibility of risks to the student.

Table XIV lists a breakdown of the number of student initiated home interventions and the area of emphasis. To assist the students in achieving their goal(s), Table XV show the interventions each student selected to achieve their initiated goal(s).

Table XIV

Student Initiated Goal(s) and their Content Area

Number of Student Initiated Goal(s)	Content for Student Initiated Goals
4	Improve vocabulary/reading skills
2	Improve math skills
2	Improve cursive writing skills
2	Complete homework assignments each day
1	Bring homework assignment home each day
1	Turn-in completed homework assignment
1	Work on improving career skills
1	Make new friends
1	Treat others appropriately
1	Work contracts with teachers
1	Improve spelling skills
1	Improve track skills
Total 18	

All of the data presented clearly demonstrates the benefits from providing junior high students with the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process and their IEP development. The students' educational rewards and increased responsibility are not apparent now, but will be noticeable in the future.

Figure XV

Number of Student Initiated Home Interventions and their Content Area

Number of Student Initiated Home Interventions	Area of Emphasis for Student Initiated Home Interventions
7	Twenty minutes of studying each evening
3	Practice at least one cursive worksheet each evening
2	Stay on task in school and at home
1	Bring homework home each day
1	Study for tests
1	Help other students and peers
1	Improve study skills for math and reading
1	Write down daily homework assignments
1	Practice the multiplication tables for at least 10 minutes each evening
1	Look-up unknown words in the dictionary and use them in a sentence
1	Practice writing unknown words
1	Keep communication open with all teachers
1	Stop using aggressive language towards other students and peers
1	Do not pick fights
1	Exercise to improve leg strength
1	Read to brother, check out books from the library
1	While riding in the car the student will read road and store signs
1	Running for 30 minutes each day after school
Total 27	

Discussion

The objective of this practicum was to improve the IEP process by increasing the active involvement of junior high regular classroom teachers, parents and students. Thus, 25 significant results on the junior high special education program. The first 6 significant results dealt with the junior high teachers.

1. The junior high teachers are taking a more active role in IEP conferences
2. The junior high teachers regularly attending IEP conferences, except for end-of-year reviews
3. The junior high teachers initiate goals and objectives for their mainstreamed students
5. The junior high teachers design modifications within the regular classroom
6. The junior high teachers fill out a semester progress report for each of their mainstreamed students.

All of these new procedures enables the regular classroom teachers to keep a current and accurate record of each mainstreamed student's progress throughout the school year.

There were 16 significant improvements involving the parents of junior high special education students. These improvements dealt with improving communication and increasing the parents' active involvement in their child's decision-making process and IEP development.

1. The parents now receive a personal letter from the special education teacher welcoming them and their child back to each new school year.

2. The parents are sent Resource Room Achievement Memos (Appendix I) each time their child demonstrates academic improvement in the resource room.

3. The parents are sent Social-Grams (Appendix J) each time their child demonstrates prosocial behavior.

4. The parents are mailed copies of magazines articles and/or legislative updates dealing with special education.

5. The parents are sent a Parent/Student Monthly Communication Form (Appendix G) stating their child's current academic and behavioral rating in the regular classroom and the resource room.

6. The Parent/Student Monthly Communication Form also states the academic and behavioral intervention strategies to be implemented in the event a student receives a negative rating in either their academics or behavior.

7. The parents are now receiving annual inservice training that focuses on a parent's rights and responsibilities regarding their child's special education program.

8. The parents of junior high special education students received a Parental Advocacy Manual for Special Education. This manual was put together by the writer and contains information from all aspects of special education and the special education process. Parents have commented that this is a great reference manual for special education information.

9. The parents now receive a list of special education terminology, acronyms and a list of organizations dealing with special education.

10. Scheduling of parent conferences are done so to involve both parents

11. The parents received a personal invitation (Appendix K) inviting them to attend the IEP conference

12. The parents received a preconference "rough draft" of the IEP

13. The parents fill out a Parent's Goals and Home Interventions Form (Appendix E)

14. The parents use a Parent's Input and Concerns Worksheet (Appendix L) to bring their personal concerns and needs to their child's IEP conference

15. The parents fill out a Student Screening Instrument (Appendix M) to ensure they support their child participating on his or her Multidisciplinary Team

The primary result of all of these newly implemented procedures gives the parents a more effective voice and greater involvement in their child's individualized education program. Furthermore, these newly implemented procedures provide the parents with the information and training needed to enable them to be their child's most important advocate.

Increasing the junior high special education student's active involvement in the decision-making process and IEP development resulted in 4 significant changes:

1. All junior high special education students are officially invited to participate on their MDT using a Student Invitation (Appendix L).

2. Each student is accurately screened to ensure no harmful effects will result in the student's membership on his or her MDT.

3. Junior high students are now provided with preconference training to improve their skills for interacting with adults. The preconference training also focuses on providing students with an understanding of how to use their personal scope and sequence list to initiate goals for the upcoming school year.

4. Each junior high student is provided the opportunity to initiate their own goals and short-term objectives using the Student's Goals for School and Home Form (Appendix F).

All of these interventions have provided the junior high students with a greater understanding of themselves, their individual deficits, and how their individualized education program (IEP) is working to improve their skills and help them to become a more productive member of society.

Recommendations

The writer has 18 overall recommendations as a result of this successful practicum. These recommendations will ensure the continued active involvement by the junior high regular classroom teacher, parents, and students in the decision-making process and IEP development. Six recommendations relate to the regular classroom teachers:

1. Over the next few years, expand the concept of this practicum to include all grade levels within the school district.
2. Continue having the regular classroom teachers initiate goals, objectives, and classroom modifications for their mainstreamed student.
3. Continue having the regular classroom teachers read and sign-off on each students IEP document if they are not actively involved in the IEP process.
4. Continue having the regular classroom teachers fill out semester progress reports regarding the progress each mainstreamed student is making towards the regular classroom initiated goals, objectives, and classroom modifications.
5. Continue having the regular classroom teachers list the modifications that will be made within the regular classroom to accommodate their mainstreamed students.
6. Provide special education inservice training to all district personnel that work with special education students.

Nine recommendations relate to the parents of special education student:

1. Continue with annual inservice training for parents with emphasis on the parents' rights and responsibilities regarding their child's individualized education program.

2. Promote a district advocacy group for parents of special education students.

3. Continue providing parents with positive monthly communication. This communication can be through the aforementioned areas of this practicum or something new. In either case, communication should focus on the positive.

4. Continue providing parents with information, such as the Parental Advocacy Manual for Special Education. This will enable the parents to keep abreast of relevant special education information.

5. Continue having the parent's initiate their personal goals and home interventions for their child.

6. Continue the pursuit of having both parents attend the IEP conference.

7. Continue having both parents, as well as all participants, sign the IEP document.

8. Continue providing the parents with a "rough draft" of the IEP at least one week before their scheduled conference.

9. Initiate a procedure that will encourage all parents of the district's special education students to take a more active role in their child's decision-making process and IEP development.

The final three recommendations relate to the junior high students:

1. All special education students should be provided training that allows them to build the skills necessary to become a more active participant in their decision-making process and IEP development.

2. All the district's special education students should be invited and encouraged to take an active part on their Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). However, each student should be properly screened to ensure no harmful effects will result from their participation. The screening procedure can follow the writer's process (Appendix M) or something similar.

3. Continue having the junior high students initiate personal goals for school and home for each upcoming school year. The writer also encourages this procedure be implemented for next year's fourth and fifth grade students and all other grades the following year.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum study will be disseminated locally to the district superintendent, the governing school board, the school administration, special education department, and the faculty during next year's inservice training sessions. On the county level, the writer will forward a copy of the practicum's results to the county superintendent's office where it will be available county-wide for interested professionals and school districts. On the state and national levels, the writer will use the context of the practicum when applying to call-for-papers for various workshops and conventions related to special education. On a personal interest level, the writer has contacted the special education department at the writer's alma mater and has been invited to be a guest lecturer during an upcoming summer session. Finally, in the coming months, the writer will be rewriting the results of the practicum to fit the format of educational journals in the field of elementary education, learning disabilities, and special education.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Parent Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to provide data that will improve the educational program for junior high special education students.

Yes No
(Check One)

☐ ☐ 1. Are you familiar with the legislation surrounding the Education for All Handicapped Children Act here after referred to as Public Law (P.L.) 94-142.

☐ ☐ 2. Are you familiar with the term "Specific Learning Disabilities" (SLD)?

☐ ☐ 3. Are you familiar with the definition of SLD?

☐ ☐ 4. Are you familiar with the symptoms of SLD?

☐ ☐ 5. Do you understand the test results when they are presented to you at the individualized education program (IEP) conference?

☐ ☐ 6. Do you understand the IEP form and its contents?

☐ ☐ 7. Do you understand what is meant by the disabled student's right to an education in the least restrictive environment (LRE)?

☐ ☐ 8. Do you understand what is meant by related services?

☐ ☐ 9. Do you understand the term educational disadvantaged?

☐ ☐ 10. Do you fully understand your rights and responsibilities as they relate to a the special education student and your child?

☐ ☐ 11. Do you understand the function of your child's multidisciplinary team (MDT)?

☐ ☐ 12. Do you understand the tests used in determining your child's progress?

☐ ☐ 13. Do you understand the terminology used during special education meetings and the IEP conference?

☐ ☐ 14. Are you familiar with the required participants for and IEP conference?

☐ ☐ 15. Are you familiar with the purpose of the IEP?

☐ ☐ 16. Are you familiar with the required components of an IEP?

☐ ☐ 17. Are you familiar with the techniques for writing an IEP?

Continue Questionnaire on the Following Page

Parent Questionnaire Cont.

Yes No
(Check one)

☐ ☐ 18. Are you familiar with the procedural protections in writing an IEP?

☐ ☐ 19. Are you familiar with the provisions for disciplining students identified as handicapped?

☐ ☐ 20. Are you familiar with your right to due process regarding your child's special education program?

The education of children is one of the most important and fundamental obligations for parents. For parents raising a handicapped student this obligation takes on an even greater importance if the child is to be successful in obtaining an education. Now, after junior high school and high school, there are university-level and technical programs across the country that are designed to educate students with learning disabilities. The following questions are related to your desire to become more actively involved in the decision-making process and the development of your child's IEP, now, and in the future.

☐ ☐ 21. Do you feel you would benefit from receiving information and/or inservice training in the special education process and IEP development?

☐ ☐ 22. Do you feel you would benefit from receiving information and/or inservice training as to your rights and responsibilities as outlined in P.L. 94-142?

☐ ☐ 23. Do you feel you would benefit from preconference training before the annual IEP conference to prepare you for active involvement in the decision-making process and the development of your child's IEP?

☐ ☐ 24. Do you feel you would benefit from having a parent-teacher collaboration model to follow that supports effective communication?

☐ ☐ 25. Do you feel you would benefit from receiving a preconference agenda stating the invited participants, their role in the conference, and scheduled items for discussion?

Thank you for your time and input. I am looking forward to working with you throughout the 1994-95 school year.

Thank You!

APPENDIX B

IEP SIGNATURE PAGE

Junior High IEP Signature Page

NAME OF STUDENT: ____________________ DOB: ______________ DATE: ______________

SCHOOL: ________________________ GRADE: ____________ SCHOOL YEAR: ______________

This placement decision was made by the student's multidisciplinary team. The following team members were either present (P) at the conference, consulted (C) before the conference, or have read (R) the IEP document and understand its contents.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEMBER PARENT(S) /GUARDIAN(S)	SIGNATURE	DATE	P/C/R	LD PLACEMENT ONLY AGREE/DISAGREE
MOTHER				
FATHER				
STUDENT				
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR				
SP. ED. DIRECTOR				
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST				
SPECIAL ED. TEACHER				
HOMEROOM TEACHER				
MATH TEACHER				
READING/LANG. TEACHER				
SCIENCE TEACHER				
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER				
COMPUTER TEACHER				
ART TEACHER				
PHYSICAL ED. TEACHER				
MUSIC, ETC.				
SP/LANGUAGE THERAPIST				
SCHOOL NURSE				
OTHER(S)				

APPENDIX C

REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER'S GOAL(S), OBJECTIVES AND MODIFICATIONS FORM

Individualized Educational Plan
Junior High Program
Regular Classroom Goals, Objectives, and Classroom Modifications Form

Teacher: ______________________ Teacher's Signature: ______________________ Grade: ____________

Resource Room Teacher: ______________________ Subject: ______________________ Percent Mainstreamed: ____________

Mainstreamed Student: ______________________ DOB: ______________________ School Year: ____________

ANNUAL GOAL/S

______________________ will:

1. ______________________
2. ______________________

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

______________________ will:

1. ______________________
2. ______________________
3. ______________________
4. ______________________

REGULAR CLASSROOM MODIFICATIONS

Environmental: ______________________

Instructional : ______________________

Materials : ______________________

Test: ______________________

Grading : ______________________

Other : ______________________

APPENDIX D

REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER'S SEMESTER PROGRESS REPORT

Regular Classroom Teacher's Semester Progress Report for Mainstreamed Students

Teacher: ____________________ Subject: ____________________

Student: ____________________ Semester: __________ School Year: __________

Goals

Yes	No	Number	
☐	☐	☐	Student Goals Initiated
		☐	Number of Goals Achieved to date

Objectives

Yes	No	Number	
☐	☐	☐	Student Objectives Listed
		☐	Number of Objectives mastered to date

Regular Classroom Modifications

Check All That Apply

☐ Environmental: ____________________

☐ Instructional: ____________________

☐ Materials: ____________________

☐ Test/Assessment Modifications: ____________________

☐ Test-Taking Modifications: ____________________

Grading/Adjusted Grading: ____________________

☐ Other (list): ____________________

____

APPENDIX E

PARENT'S GOAL(S) AND HOME INTERVENTIONS FORM

Individualized Educational Plan
Junior High Program
Parent's Goal(s) and Home Intervention Form
School Year: 19________

Parent: ______________ Parent Signature: ______________ Child: ______________

GOAL(S)

______________ will:

1. ______________

2 ______________

3. ______________

4. ______________

5. ______________

HOME INTERVENTIONS

1. ______________

2. ______________

3. ______________

4. ______________

5. ______________

6. ______________

7. ______________

APPENDIX F

STUDENT'S GOAL(S) FOR SCHOOL AND HOME FORM

Individualized Educational Plan
Junior High Program
Student's Goal(s) for School and Home Form
School Year: 19________

Student: ____________________ Student Signature: ____________________ Parent: ____________________

GOAL(S)

____________________ will:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________

SCHOOL & HOME SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________
6. ____________________
7. ____________________

APPENDIX G

MONTHLY COMMUNICATION FORM

Parent/Student
MONTHLY COMMUNICATION FORM
Month/Year

Student Name: ____________________ Grade : ______ Resource Teacher: ____________________

Regular Teacher's Initials		Subject Grade [* if adjusted]	Citizenship/Behavioral Rating [Circle one that applies]
☐	Math	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Reading	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Language	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Science	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Social Studies	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Computer Education	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Physical Education	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Art	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement

The teacher's monthly comments, concerns, and academic and behavioral intervention strategies are listed on the back side of this communication form. Please sign and return the form to the resource room teacher.

Resource Classes		Current Grade	Citizenship/Behavioral Rating
☐	Math	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Reading	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Language	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement
☐	Other	%	Excellent Good Needs Improvement

Teacher's Signature	Student's Signature	Parent's Signature

*** * * Return This Form to the Resource Room Teacher * * ***

APPENDIX H

MONTHLY COMMUNICATION FORM (SIDE 2)

Parent/Student
Monthly Communication Form
Month/Year
Academic & Behavioral Intervention Strategies

Student: ______________ Grade: __________ Teacher: ______________

Monthly Academic/Behavioral Intervention Strategies/Regular Classroom
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Monthly Academic/Behavioral Intervention Strategies/Resource Room
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

APPENDIX I

RESOURCE ROOM ACHIEVEMENT MEMO

Resource Room Achievement Memo

Name: ____________________ Today's Date: ____________________

Subject: ____________________ Grade: ____________________

Achievement

Teacher: ____________________

APPENDIX J

SOCIAL-GRAM

Now Hear This!!!

Social-Gram

POSITIVE PEER BEHAVIOR OR PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR HAS BEEN OBSERVED!

DATE OF OBSERVANCE: ______________

Student ______________________________ Grade ________________________

The following is a description of the positive peer behavior or prosocial behavior that your son or daughter has demonstrated:____

Observer: ____________________

APPENDIX K

IEP INVITATION

IEP Invitation

TO PARTICIPATE ON THE

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

AND IN ITS

Decision-Making Process

This is an invitation for you to become an active participant in the decision-making process and IEP development. The location, date, time, and expected participants are listed below. The school faculty and staff are looking forward to having you as an active member multidisciplinary team (MDT).

Conference Location: ______________________________

Date: ______________________ Time: ______________________

Participant's Name	Position

APPENDIX L

PARENT'S INPUT AND CONCERNS WORKSHEET

Parent's Input & Concerns Worksheet

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
9. ______________________________
10. ______________________________
11. ______________________________
12. ______________________________
13. ______________________________
14. ______________________________
15. ______________________________
16. ______________________________
17. ______________________________
18. ______________________________
19. ______________________________
20. ______________________________
22. ______________________________
23. ______________________________
24. ______________________________
25. ______________________________

APPENDIX M

STUDENT SCREENING INSTRUMENT (SIDE 1)

Student Screening Instrument for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Participation

Participant Name:________________________ Position:__________________

Student:______________________ Grade:________ Date:__________

This instrument is to be completed by the multidisciplinary team (MDT) of the above student

The local education agency (LEA) and parents should discuss the appropriateness of involving the student before the decision is made. The LEA decision and the parents' decision should be based on the Federal criteria (§ 300.344(a)(4)) for student involvement. The Federal criterion asks two questions. Will the child's participation in the IEP process be: (1) helpful in the development of the IEP and/or (2) directly beneficial to the child. If the answer to these two questions is affirmative, the child should participate. This instrument will help to determine the appropriateness of involving the above student in his/her IEP and the decision-making process. The MDT members should use the following participation scale to specify what degree of participation is appropriate for the student.

Student Participation Scale

Circle One

No Participation   Partial Participation   Full Participation

If "Partial Participation" is determined by the MDT participant, the "Partial Participation Checklist" on the reverse side of this instrument should be filled out indicating the degree of participation. If "No Participation" is determined by the MDT participant, a justification for the rating should be stated in the "No Participation" section on the reverse side of this Instrument.

REVERSE SIDE OF THIS INSTRUMENT:

"Justification Section for No Participation"
"Partial Participation Checklist"

APPENDIX N

STUDENT SCREENING INSTRUMENT (SIDE 2)

Student Screening Instrument for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Participation

Justification Section for a "No Participation" Rating

Student: ____________________ Grade: ________ Date: ________

____

____

____

Student Screening Instrument

MDT Limited Participation Checklist

Student: ____________________ Grade: ________ Date: ________

- ☐ The student is to be informed of his/her test results only (achievement summary).
- ☐ The student is to be informed of his/her test results and psychoeducational evaluation only.
- ☐ The student is to be counseled with regarding his/her instructional and/or behavioral goals and objectives for the upcoming school year.
- ☐ The student is to be counseled with regarding the MDT's determination of the student's least restrictive environment.
- ☐ The student is to be counseled with regarding their specific learning deficits.
- ☐ The student is to be counseled with regarding the MDT's recommendations.
- ☐ The student is to be invited to attend the IEP meeting only.
- ☐ Other: (explain)______________________________________

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